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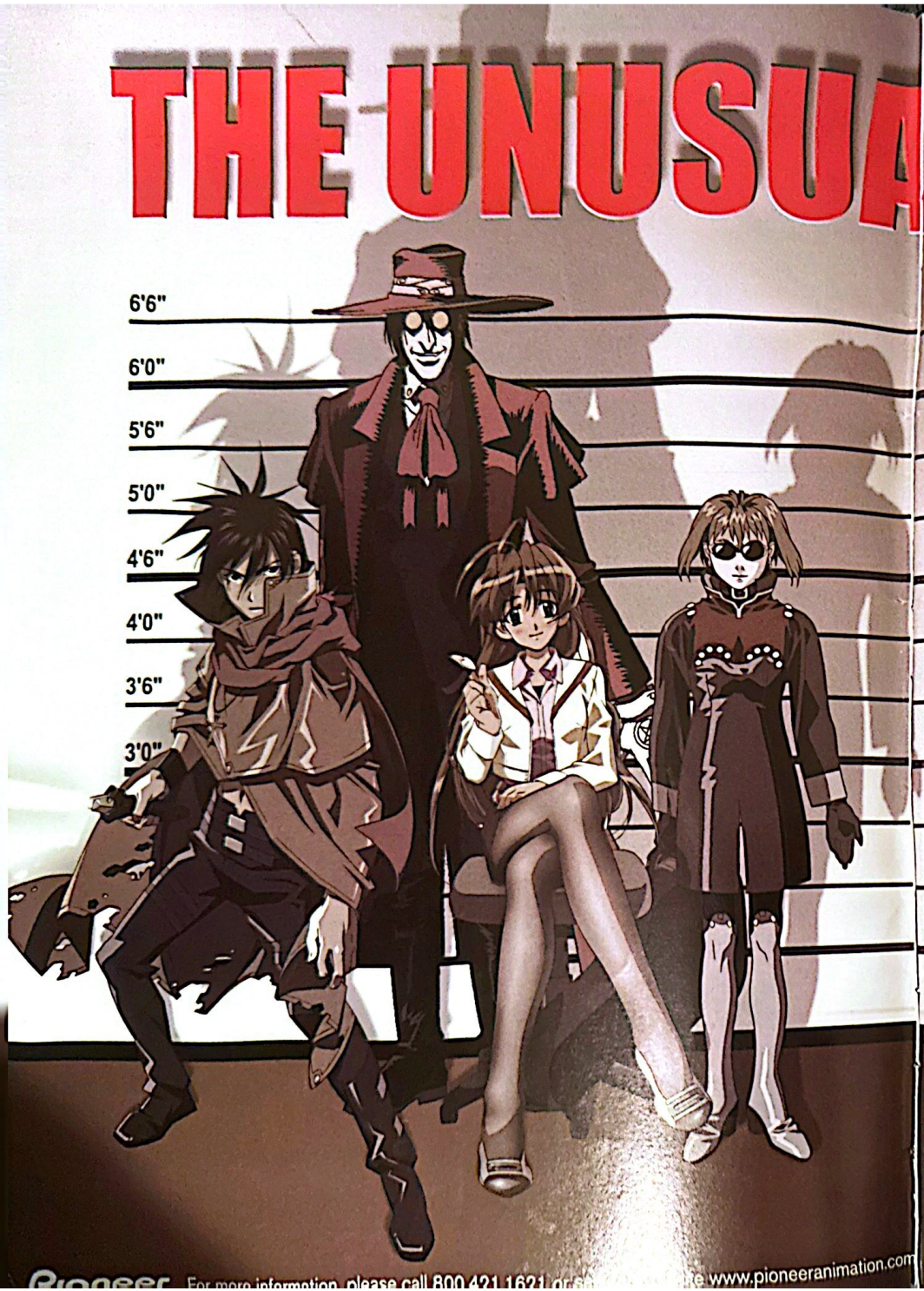

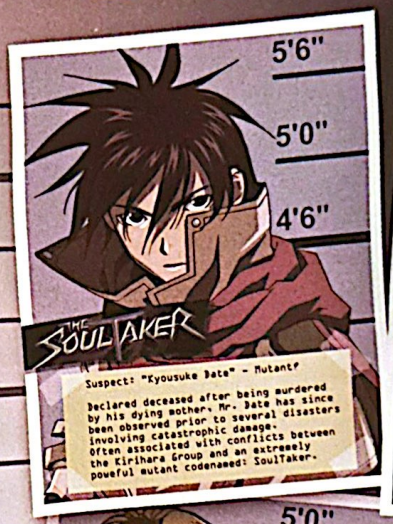
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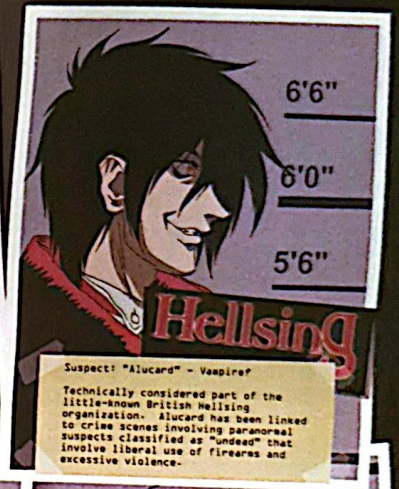
4'6"
THE SOULTAKER
Suspect: "Kyousuke Date" - Mutant?
Declared deceased after being murdered by his dying mother. Mr. Date has since been observed prior to several disasters involving catastrophic damage. Often associated with conflicts between the Eirihara Group and an extremely poweful mutant codenamed: SoulTaker.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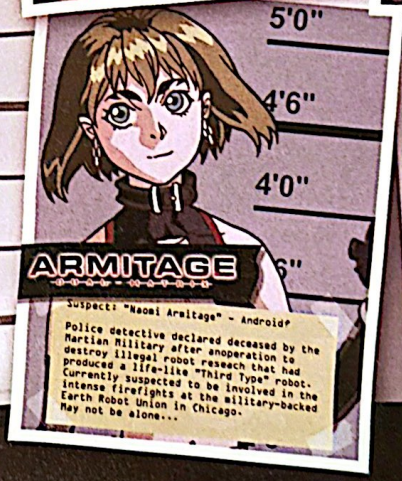
Hellsing
Suspect: "Alucard" - Vampire?
Technically considered part of the little-known British Hellsing organization. Alucard has been linked to crime scenes involving paranormal suspects classified as "undead" that involve liberal use of firearms and excessive violence.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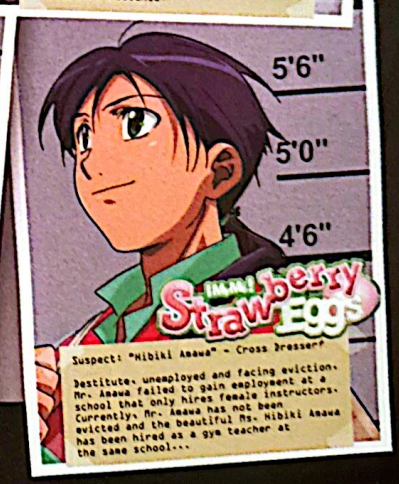
4'0"
ARMITAGE
Suspect: "Naomi Armitage" - Android?
Police detective declared deceased by the Martian Military after anoperation to destroy illegal robot research that had produced a life-like "Third Type" robot. Currently suspected to be involved in the intense firefights at the military-backed Earth Robot Union in Chicago.
May not be alone...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IMAI Strawberry Eggs
Suspect: "Hibiki Amawa" - Cross Dresser?
Destitute, unemployed and facing eviction, Mr. Amawa failed to gain employment at a school that only hires female instructors. Currently, Mr. Amawa has not been evicted and the beautiful Ms. Hibiki Amawa has been hired as a gym teacher at the same school...

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ANIME INVASION CONTENTS

#3 • SUMMER 2002

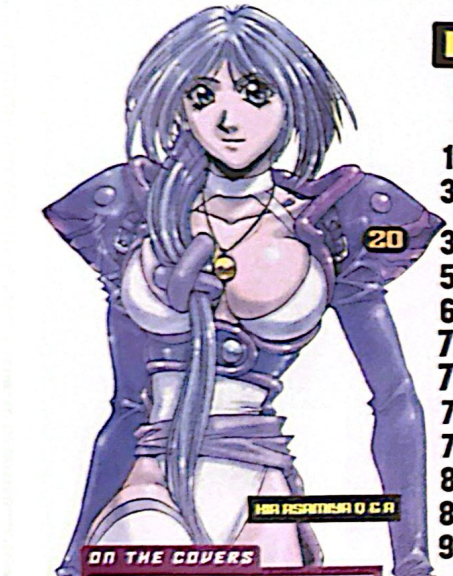
FEATURES

20 **SILENT RUNNING** Manga superstar Kia Asamiya raps about *Silent Mobius*, America and what he really thinks of Japan. **By Tom Root**

26 **TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL** The ultimate guide to *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, one of anime's best—and most confusing—series. **By Jonathan Clements**

38 **DRAWN TOGETHER** We've picked out the top ten hottest couples ever to get animated! Bring a Kleenex... **By Helen McCarthy**

48 **EYE OF THE TOONAMI** *Anime Invasion* goes behind the scenes of TV's hottest block of programming and gives you the tour! **By Robert Bricken**



DEPARTMENTS

6 **FROM THE TOP** From us to you

8 **ANIMAIL** Onward, otaku soldiers

14 **INVASION NEWS & NOTES**

32 **LAST MAN STANDING** Ranma Saotome vs. Jubei-chan the ninja girl

34 **RE'ANIME'TED** We form the head for Voltron

58 **VIDEO & DVD** ADV celebrates 10 years

68 **TELEVISION** *G-Gundam* battles its way to U.S.

72 **THEATRICAL** Anime goes live?! *Spirited Away* at last?

74 **VIDEO GAMES** Game Boy Anime!

76 **INTERNET** Get your manga online, straight from Japan

78 **STUFF** More *otaku* goodness to throw your yen at

80 **MANGA** Pop quiz! *Great Teacher Onizuka* is here

88 **MANGA PRICE GUIDE** *Yu-Gi-Oh!* cards!

96 **INVASION PROFILE** *Bubblegum Crisis'* Priss

ON THE COVERS

Dragon Ball Z's Goku has a blast thanks to the artistic talents of Humberto Ramos, and card-carrying Yugi of *Yu-Gi-Oh!* is by Kazuki Takahashi.

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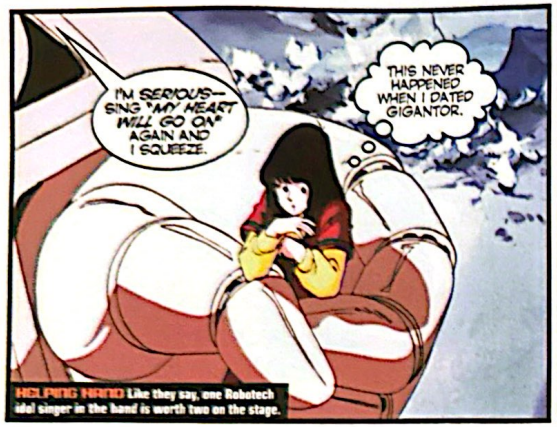
FROM THE TOP

KEEPING THINGS WELL IN HAND



HELPING HAND Like they say, one Robotech idol singer in the hand is worth two on the stage.

It's a good thing we have anime.

A bold statement, I know, but I feel strongly that American pop culture owes a great debt to the other side of the ocean. After all, where would the animation fans of America be without the giant robots of anime? Nowhere, that's where. Without anime, there'd be no *Transformers*, no *Tranzor* (a.k.a. *Mazinger*) Z and—most distressingly—there'd be no *Robotech*.

Growing up, I had no idea that *Robotech* was a collage of different anime from Japan; I just knew that there was a great show on TV with a continuing plotline that far outshone the majority of the other cartoons on the air. Instead of everything reverting to the status quo at the end of every episode, things changed. People died or fell in love (sometimes both), and I couldn't understand why every cartoon wasn't that good.

Later, I realized that the innate goodness in *Robotech* came from its Japanese source material. Not to diminish the excellent work done by editors here in the U.S., but these three separate and sophisticated anime series from Japan ushered in a new era for me; I now expected depth, drama and change even from "lowly" cartoons. All thanks to anime.

And its influence on me continues to this day. I still don't consider myself an otaku, but anime recently sucked me in again in the form of *Mobile Suit Gundam*. Funny that a Japanese TV show from 20 years ago can still seem refreshingly different to an American audience two decades later. Which is good...we can all learn a little something from this cultural exchange. For instance: even with their own giant, massively powerful suits of robotic armor, teenagers still whine.

Sincerely,

Adam Patyk

Adam Patyk
Associate Editor, *Anime Invasion*

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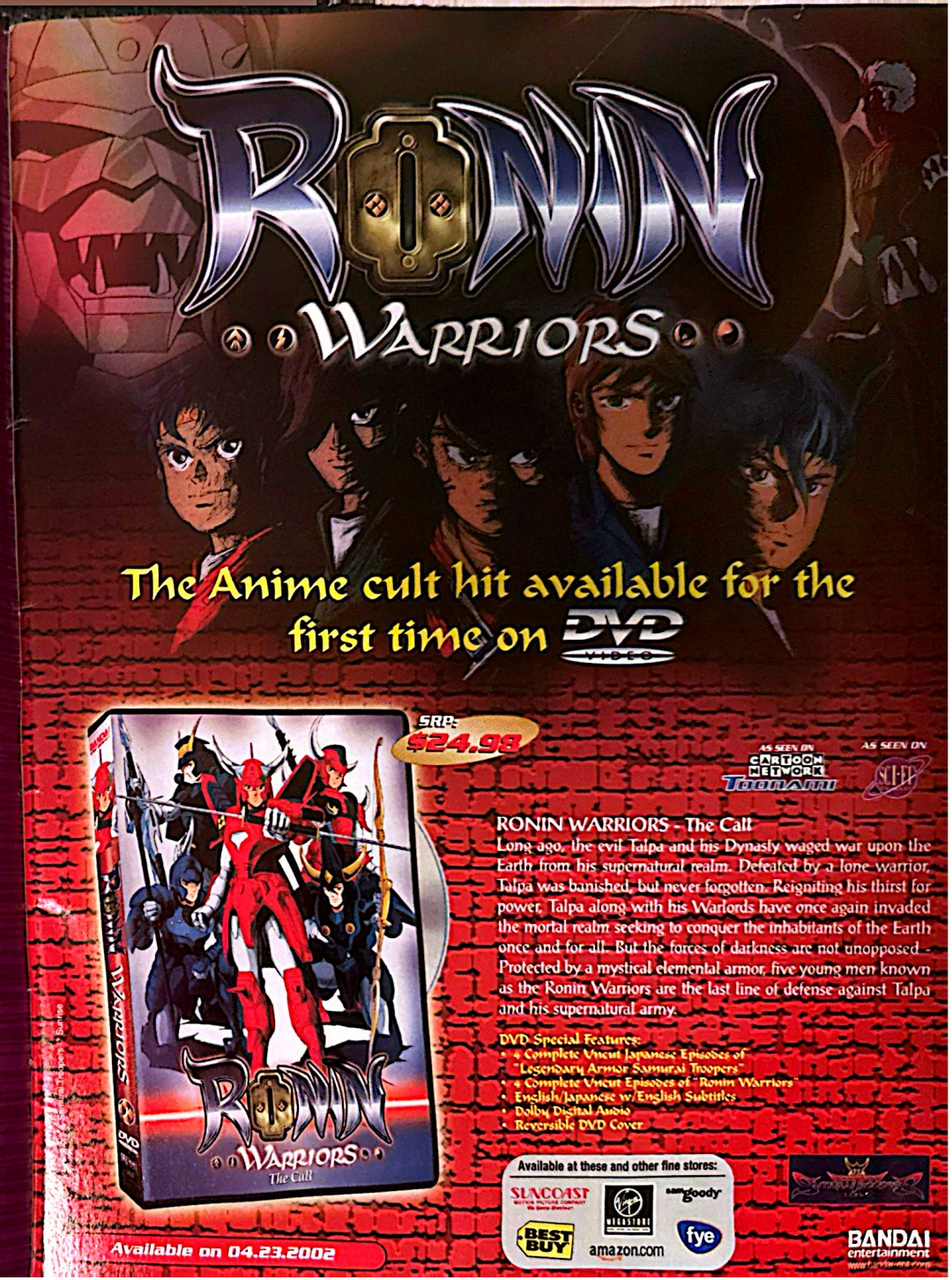
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ANIMAIL!

TATTOO YOU!

Yeesh! Anime fans are some of the most opinionated folks in the world! They let us know whether they love or hate every single page of our magazine, which is fine with us—it means we're only going to get better.

What do readers love? "Last Man Standing," for one thing. Each time I open the mailbox, I've got a couple hundred suggestions for anime match-ups!

What do readers hate? When we make fun of their favorite anime! Sorry, Pokémon fans, sometimes it's just gotta be done.

But whether readers love it or hate it, it's all good for me, because it means I get scads of missives to pick from for each edition of this here letters column.

Speaking of which...let's get to it!

DEAR ANIME INVASION,

In issue #1 you mentioned the new *Final Fantasy Unlimited* series, but said that since it was not yet licensed, our only chance to see it would be to "hope."

Why didn't you mention the fact that it could be acquired on fansub? (I have the first 13 episodes.) As a newsstand publication, is *Anime Invasion* prohibited from mentioning that great gray area that is fansubs? I've noticed your avoidance of using the term or mentioning titles that can only be acquired as such.

Trevor Monaghan
Kajumaster@hotmail.com

We're not prohibited from mentioning fansubs. But you're right, we're never going to write, "By the way, Anime Series X won't be out in the U.S. for a while, but you can pick up illegal copies at www.fansubbersahoy.com."

The true spirit of fansubs (anime series subtitled by fans, for fans and distributed without a license) is noble: nobody makes a profit, everyone shares, and the instant a licensed version is available, the fansubbing ceases.

In reality, fansubs violate copyright laws, most are sold for profit (just go to any convention for proof), and the majority are so many generations removed from the master copy that the picture quality suffers.

You can watch Final Fantasy Unlimited right now. Or you can buy an Eskimo baby. Or a suitcase full of smack. There's black markets for everything. It just wouldn't be responsible for us to tell you how to find them.

DEAR ANIME INVASION,

I wanna get a tattoo of a manga/anime character. I'm after a really sexy girl, maybe Yuri from the Dirty Pair.

If you guys have anything in mind, could you please tell me? I'll send a photo of the tattoo once it's finished.

Adam Rotherham
Dboxhead@aol.com

The only member of our staff with an anime tattoo is Associate Editor Rob Bricken, who's partial to Lum from Urusei Yatsura (as shown in last issue's editorial). We think Editor Doug Goldstein has a Charmander on his buttcheek, but he won't show us. So, we came up with a Safe Pick and a Daring Pick. Our Safe Pick is Motoko Kusanagi from Ghost in the Shell. More or less the world's most classic anime chick, she's techno and hot, with blue hair. Yeah.

Our Daring Pick is Chi Chi from Dragon Ball Z. That's like having a tattoo of your mom.

We really hope you pick the second one.

OTAKU'S BLACK BOOK

HEY, OTAKU FREAKS! Write to us here at "Letters from the Geek" c/o Anime Invasion, 151 Wells Ave., Conyers, NY 10925, or get with the times and e-mail us at animeinvasion@wizardnet.com. And hey, we also love letters and art—we know anime fans draw the best, and we want to show off the best you've got, along with the best cosplayers. Thanks, y'all

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DEAR ANIME INVASION,

In *Sailor Moon R* and *S*, Sailor Moon dies, right? Or is that just a rumor? Because when I saw those episodes on Cartoon Network, she didn't die. Did Cartoon Network edit Sailor Moon's death out of the dubbed version when it aired on American TV or what?

Randy W. Scribner Jr.
Charlotte, NC

Plenty of Sailor Moon mayhem never made it to U.S. television, but her supposed death at the end of the R and S seasons isn't on the list. Characters die all throughout* Sailor Moon, *but you won't catch it on American TV unless you read between the lines.

DEAR ANIME INVASION,

Can you think of anyway to beg, cajole or convince Disney to release more of the Miyazaki films it owns the rights to? Straight-to-DVD would be a lesser but acceptable option. Should we rather try to convince Studio Ghibli to release code-free discs with English subtitles? I can't be the only person waiting to see *Nausicaa*, etc.

David Graham, M.D.
Champaign, IL

Nobody's holding out much hope that Disney will have a change of heart on the Studio Ghibli catalog. The best thing to do is lend your voice to the struggle and send a brief, intelligent letter to David Jessen, c/o Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 350 S. Buena Vista St., Burbank, CA 91521-4691. However, there is some good news from Disney, if you'll check our Theatrical section...

DEAR ANIME INVASION,

I have been creating my own anime recently, and I have just finished the first part in a three-part series. I've sent e-mails to companies asking if they would take a look at it, but they say it's not possible due to copyright laws. Is there

FAN ART

Wanna prove to the anime world just what a jam-tastic artiste you are? Then send us your artwork! Send it snail mail to Anime Invasion, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920 or send it the way the eggheads do, via e-mail at animeinvasion@aol.com. All submissions MUST include the character name(s) and YOUR full name and address, including city and state. Got it? Got it? Good!

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BY MICHAEL SHELFER, SNEADS, FL

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any way I can have a company look at it?

Callum James Cox
ST16835J@ccb.ac.uk

Whatever state your anime's in, here's the answer to your question. Chad Kime, Pioneer Entertainment's marketing manager, explains, "When they say it's a copyright issue, what they're really saying is, it's a liability issue. If we open up a script, and then we ever release something close to that script, we open ourselves up to a lawsuit." For that reason, U.S. anime distributors prefer to merely pursue pre-existing properties.

Kime adds that if you go straight to the anime source, Japan, you're going to have a language barrier that prohibits you from getting your idea made. Also, "Most animation studios have whole filing cabinets of ideas they want to pursue," he says, making the odds of your idea getting picked pretty slim.

Kime very kindly equates the chances of an amateur getting their idea animated to a "snowball's chance in hell," and I'm inclined to agree. But if it's your dream, go for it!

DEAR ANIME INVASION,

I'm a British anime fan who speaks and reads Japanese fluently. I own the episode of *Sailor Moon* mentioned in the top 10 anime fights of all time [issue #2] in both Japanese and English, and to be honest, all the people that have seen it in both versions agree that the unedited version is more enjoyable to watch.

Now, I know that the FCC has to edit scenes like that, but why can't Pioneer or someone release an unedited version with a higher age rating? That way true fans could fully enjoy the show. What are your thoughts on this?

Lee Spinks
London, England

First of all, it's not up to the Federal Communications Commission. It's up to the studios; either their own standards for video release, or the individual network's standards for TV release. The FCC would step in if Cartoon Network was showing anime porn at noon, but otherwise they're way too busy pestering Howard Stern. It's all about the money, baby. If there was a profit to be made, believe me, it'd already be happening.

Another concern? Hurting profits. If a studio can make a little extra money by putting out Sailor Moon with a violent, naked, drunken Serena, but it threatens the big money they're making with the edited Sailor Moon, then it's not worth the risk. Imagine the crapstorm the first time an American parent discovers they've given their child the wrong version.

That's all for this issue! Remember, we read each and every letter you send, so keep those suckers flowing!

—Tom Root

As Tom Root learned in fifth grade, you can only run around in your underwear calling yourself Astro Boy for so long before you earn a trip to the counselor.

THE FRONT DOOR

Hey newbies—wanna know what all these anime fans are babbling about?

BAKA—[BAH-kah] Japanese for "idiot."
ECCHI—[EH-chee] Just like hentai, it means "pervert" or "perverted," but it has milder connotations.
FANSUB—[fm...FAN-suh?] Unlicensed copies of anime with subtitles added by fans.
GASHAPON—[GASH-a-pon] Japanese vending machine toys.
KAWAII—[ka-WHY-ee] Japanese for "cute."
MANGA—[MAHN-ga] Japanese comic books.
OTAKU—[oh-TOCK-oo] An anime fan. In Japan, it's generally a negative term, but here it's the equivalent of "fanboy."
SHŌJO—[SHOW-jo] An adjective meaning "for girls."
SHŌNEN—[SHO-nehn] An adjective meaning "for boys."
TANKŌBAN—[TAN-ko-bahn] The Japanese equivalent of a "trade paperback"—a collection of many issues of manga.
VCD—Stands for Video Compact Disc. A low-quality format found in Asian markets. ■ RB

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INVASION NEWS+NOTES

YU-GI-OH! PLAYS TO WIN

New Anime Superstar Fights to be the Next Phenom

Take a wild guess: How many Yu-Gi-Oh! cards do you think were sold in Japan—before they came to the U.S.? Thousands? Millions? Try 3.5 *billion*. That's how popular Yu-Gi-Oh! has been. And guess what else? The cards just hit the U.S. in March, and fans are already grabbing products as fast as they hit the shelves. Not since Pokémon has a character, a concept and an entire world caught the imagination of so many kids and collectors.

Yu-Gi-Oh! started as a simple manga series in 1996, created by 35-year-old Kazuki Takahashi. The manga had a strong debut, becoming an instant hit, but it was the animated series, which debuted in 2000, that jump-started the phenomenon, making Takahashi a major celebrity and one of Japan's foremost comic artists. Suddenly it seemed as though every kid wanted to be "King of Games," and not just by watching TV—they wanted to actually play the game, just like the show's hero, Yugi. In fact, Roz Nowicki, vice president of marketing for 4Kids Entertainment, the company that brought Yu-Gi-Oh! to the U.S., said that it was the Japanese fans who originally demanded the cards—and subsequently made them best-sellers.

The TV show debuted in the U.S. last September 29 on Kids WB! and at press time, 26 of a total of 48 planned episodes for the first year had aired. Nowicki noted that the excitement has kept building, and in April, Kids WB! expanded their presence, with the animated series airing six days a week.

As of the last weekend in April, the show had achieved astonishing ratings, ranking #1 for boys ages 6-17 and #2 for boys 9-14, coming in only behind *The Simpsons*. With that kind of hit, you can be darn sure that there's going to be a plethora of products to satisfy the ever-growing fan base. "We're really jazzed about *Yu-Gi-Oh!* because it takes anime to a new level," said Mark Sullivan, vice president of marketing for boys toys at Mattel. "It's a little edgier, and the kids who grew up with *Pokémon* or *Digimon* are graduating to *Yu-Gi-Oh!*"

And they're buying the stuff. Erin Riley, anime/gaming buyer for the retailer Forbidden Planet in New York, said, "We started selling the Japanese cards, and always had them, and they sold occasionally. But once the American version came out, sales totally went insane!" The store is one of the official tournament centers, sponsored by Upper Deck, makers of the cards.

Riley notes that when the limited edition gold foil first set of cards came out starter sets that normally go for $9.99 were fetching $14.99, and folks were happy to pay it. She predicted that that trend would level out a bit when the limited silver edition was released in early [illegible] she doesn't see demand slowing. Riley says the craze is happening because kids want to play the game, describing it as an "awesome, really cool experience."

FULL HOUSE *Yu-Gi-Oh!* cards have been selling out like hotcakes across the nation.

What's making all the other products so hot is the integrated gameplan of 4Kids and the companies making the products. Konami sold out its Game Boy Advance and PS1 games very quickly, and Mattel's line is designed to keep people coming back for more. As Nowicki explained, kids love that Yu-Gi-Oh! and all the related products are "sophisticated and not talking down to them. Kids really know that this has depth and heart," she said, adding that kids love that the game is challenging—and the storyline is one to which virtually all kids can relate. "When they watch the show [or play the game], kids feel like they could actually achieve something." She added that kids respond to how deeply the property is thought out and that they can master all the complex strategies of the game. And it's not just boys who love it—girls are discovering how great Yu-Gi-Oh! is as well. In fact, the Asian Champion for the Duel Monsters game is a 12-year-old girl from Hong Kong.

So, cards will continue to "evaporate" as they hit the shelves, with new sets hitting the market about every eight weeks throughout 2002. Mattel has launched its line of two-inch collectible figures, with 40 planned by the end of this year, and will introduce a 6-inch line, with card-revealing action. Mattel is also introducing a line of Deluxe Monsters, starting with Blue Eyes White Dragon, with ten new figures released every other month for the next year, and a line of Fusion Monsters coming in spring of 2003. There's even a collector's game called Hexors, coming for the end of this year; starter packs will have ten figures on game-piece bases; and blind boosters (you won't know which figures you get till you get home) to expand the game play.

Plus, there are video games for additional platforms coming by the end of this year, as well as fashion items, accessories, and pretty much anything the Yu-Gi-Oh! fan could want.

And you know what? This is just the beginning. While it may not outstrip Pokémon on a worldwide basis, and cautious folks remind us that lightning doesn't strike twice, Yu-Gi-Oh! is lighting up the sky with a lot of excitement, and with the fan base growing hourly, the King of Games looks like he's going to keep winning. ■ Christopher Byrne

YU-GI-WHO?

THE CHARACTERS THAT MAKE YU-GI-OH'S MONSTER MOVE

The ancient Egyptians were crazy about the Shadow Game, which let them duel with real monsters and magic, but the Pharaoh feared the game would destroy the world and banned it. He ordered the seven Millennium Items used to play it sealed away forever—"forever" in this case being a few thousand years, give or take. The Millennium Items start to resurface in our modern time, and the ancient forbidden game is reborn as Duel Monsters. That's the premise of *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, the latest anime poised to conquer North American airwaves. If you're a Yu-Gi-newbie, here are some of the key players in this show and what makes them tick.

YUGI Yugi was a regular guy, if a bit naive, until he solved the Millennium puzzle his Grandpa gave him. Now whenever the puzzle activates, the spirit sealed inside takes over, turning Yugi into Yami Yugi, the powerful Duel Monsters master.

MAXIMILIAN PEGASUS Pegasus is the suave, sophisticated creator of Duel Monsters, which he based on the ancient Egyptian Shadow Game. His left eye was replaced with the Millennium Eye, which gives him dark magical powers.

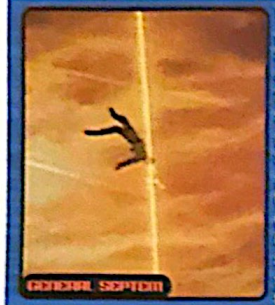
BAKURA Bakura is a talented duelist and classmate of Yugi's. Bakura's Millennium Ring holds the spirit of an evil ancient thief who possesses Bakura whenever the Ring is activated and has the power to send people's souls into the Shadow Realm.

GRANDPA Yugi's Grandpa, a former world traveler, owns the local game shop. He's the one who gave Yugi the Millennium Puzzle to solve and is the one who teaches him to respect the "heart" of the game. ■ Kathy Hassinger

Scanned with CamScanner

DEATH OF THE MONTH

GENERAL SEPTEM FROM *GUNDAM WING*



The Gundam Wing pilots were only trying to destroy OZ. So when they saw a plane of OZ personnel leaving the New Edwards base, they though they were doing a good thing by destroying it. However, General Septem, secretly working with OZ, had covertly filled the ship with peace delegates, tricking the Gundam Wing pilots into destroying those they sought to protect. However, to keep their deception a secret, OZ's Lady Une disposed of Septem quite handily—after dropping him out a trap door in their own jet, Une leans over the rail, aims and then *shoots him through the head* as he's falling to Earth from about 38,000 feet. Better safe than sorry, right? Even Treize, leader of OZ, has to look at Une and say, "What is *wrong* with you?" ■ RB

RISING FUN

WHAT'S HOT IN JAPAN RIGHT NOW?

HOT ON TV: *Rahxephon*. In a clever anime twist, in the year 2015, the entire world has been destroyed *except* for Tokyo. Or so Ayato Kamina has been raised to believe. Things change when he realizes that it's actually 2027 and he's destined to pilot giant fighting robots to battle invaders from another world.

HOT IN TOYS: Action figures based on Go Nagai's salacious superhero classic Cutey Honey feature all of the major female characters from the series complete with removable tops. Coincidentally, they were released by Moby Dick Toys. Hmm...

HOT IN VIDEO GAMES: Virtua Fighter seems to be getting less virtual and more realistic (visually at least) with each installment. The latest edition, Virtua Fighter 4 for the PS2, features some bits of story but it's, uh, mostly about fighting. Hey, people aren't buying it 'cause it's about knitting.

HOT IN THE MOVIES: *Patlabor WXIII (Wasted Thirteen)*, the third theatrical Patlabor release, is running in tandem with the short film *Minipato* or "Mini-Patlabor." Imagine *Patlabor* done like *Li'l Archie* but executed on computers and directed by Mamoru Oshii (*Ghost in the Shell*, and you'll have an idea why fans are flocking to the theaters. ■ Kumar Sivasubramaniam

HEAVEN ON EARTH

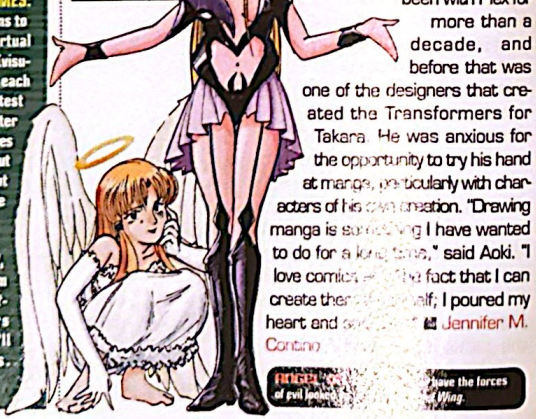
Japanese design team debuts manga in U.S.

You may not know the name Plex International Design, but you know their work. One of Japan's leading toy design and TV planning companies, they've worked on toys for such properties as *Gundam*, *Digimon*, *Masked Rider*, *Ultraman*, and they created the *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*. Now they're getting into the manga game, and America's going to see it first.

Unlike most Japanese comics, Plex's initial release, *Angel's Wing*, will be a full-color title, starting with an 80-page one-shot this July. "We had originally planned to publish *Angel's Wing* in the United States," said the book's creator, Tetsuya Aoki. "As most comics in America are in color, it made sense to do *AW* in color too. I think color comics are very beautiful to look at. Color art also has an abundance of expression and emotion."

Angel's Wing is a story about angels, legends and innocent bystanders. "There is a legend that every Christmas Eve, an angel descends from Heaven to grant wishes to the lucky humans whom it encounters," explained Aoki. "Upstart angel Mary gets thrown for a loop when she discovers the forces of evil are trying to prevent her from carrying out her duties and responsibilities. Assisted by a human boy, Mary has to fight the shadow forces and preserve her angelic legacy."

Aoki may be a newcomer to the world of manga, but this veteran toy designer has been with Plex for more than a decade, and before that was one of the designers that created the Transformers for Takara. He was anxious for the opportunity to try his hand at manga, particularly with characters of his own creation. "Drawing manga is something I have wanted to do for a long time," said Aoki. "I love comics [illegible] the fact that I can create them myself; I poured my heart and [illegible]" ■ Jennifer M. Contino



PlayStation
KONAMI
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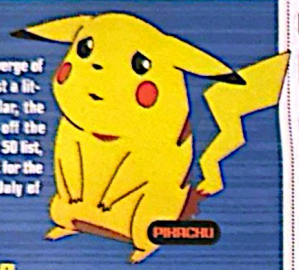
IT HAD TO BE LOCKED AWAY FOR A MILLENNIA.
NOW ONE BOY HAS RELEASED THAT POWER!
Yu-Gi-Oh!
FORBIDDEN MEMORIES™
EVERYONE
Violence
PlayStation 2

SPEEDLINES

ITTY BITTY BUZZ BITS TO CHEW ON

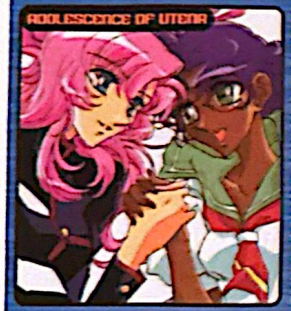
POKÉDROP

The beloved Pokémon franchise may be on the verge of its bubble bursting...just a little. Although still popular, the property recently slid off the Lycos search engine's top 50 list, where it held the #1 spot for the entirety of 1999 until July of 2000.



SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE

Toy company Bandai Japan recently rewarded their stockholders of 1,000 shares or more with a special gift: their own pet. Of course, there's a twist. The "pet" is Bandai's robotic toy version of the *Mobile Suit Gundam* mascot Haro. The toy proved extremely popular in Japan, so Bandai decided to share the joy with shareholders.



FILM FROLIC

Anime is gaining even more mainstream acceptance...well, maybe not quite so mainstream, but it certainly demonstrates the increasingly wide appeal of anime! The 26th San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, held June 13-30, will be showing *Adolescence of Utena* as part of its program this year.

GREAT HEAD!

What's 7 feet tall and 6 feet wide? The world's only life-size Gundam head! Toy company Bandai America unveiled the monster prop at their brand-new Bandai Shop, in the Metreon's Action Theatre in San Francisco. The festivities included a model-building contest and the U.S. debut screening of *G-Gundam*.

■ Adam Patyk

UNIFICATION THEORY

Documentary *Otaku Unite!* focuses on the fans

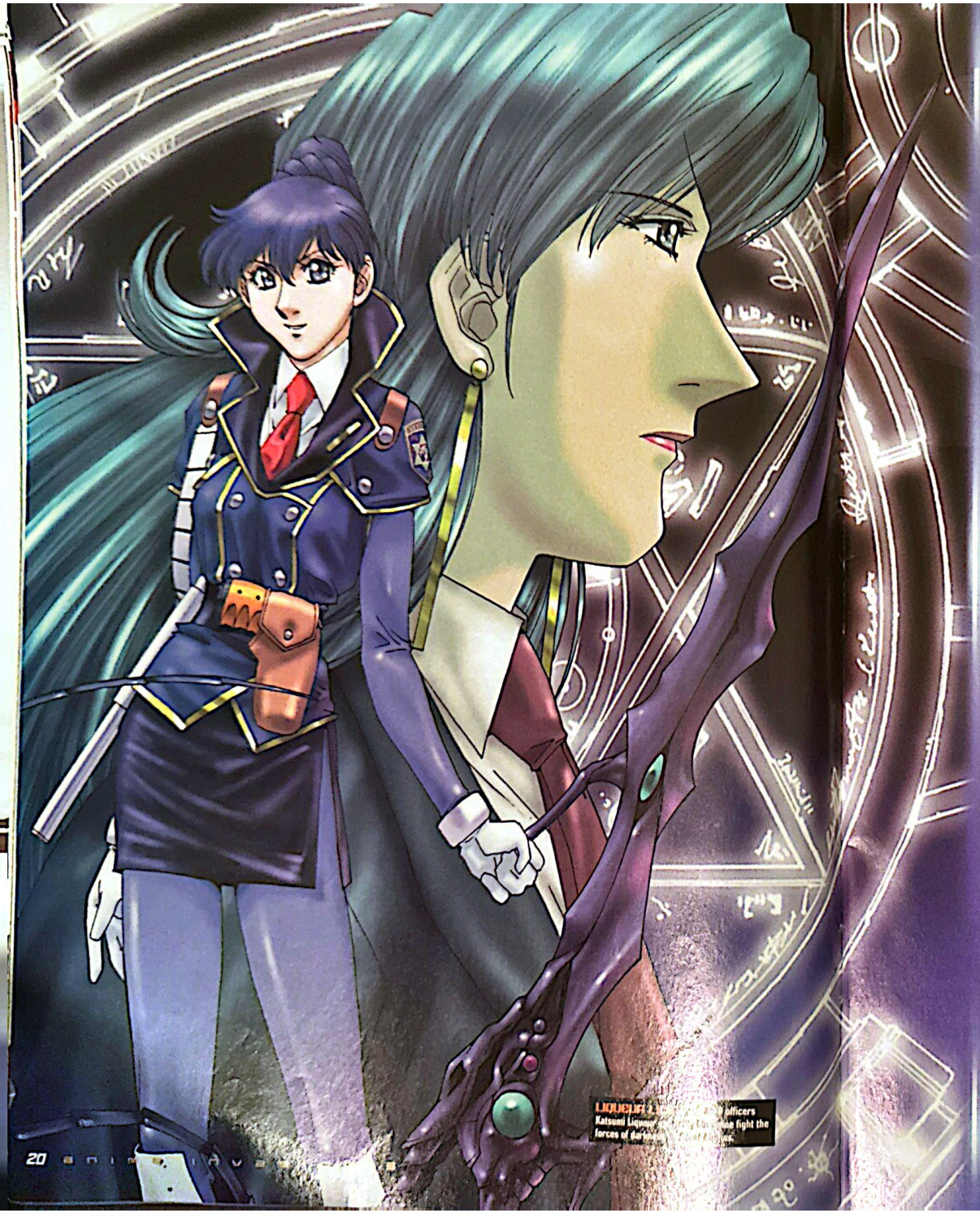
Wanna be a movie star? Well, it's too late. First-time director Eric Bresler has already shot *Otaku Unite!*, a feature-length documentary on anime culture. But you'll be able to watch it soon.

Bresler conceived of it when a friend dragged him to Otacon, the anime convention held in Baltimore, in 1999. "I was blown away by the commitment each fan had not just for anime, but the whole culture," said Bresler. "I started doing research. It's a fan-based community with 25 years of history. It has such depth that I thought it was perfect for a project like this." Bresler went to a total of nine anime conventions in three years, from New York to San Francisco, doing interviews with U.S. anime producers, Japanese anime artists about American fandom, and, most of all, the fans. "We visited the homes and businesses of anime fans," explained Bresler. "We sought out the older fans who helped mold [fandom] in the late '70s. We tried to reveal the impact anime has had on American society."

HELLO, SAILOR! Sadly, Tim's mother never let him dress up as Tuxedo Mask.

"Anime fans never cease to amaze me," said the 22-year-old Bresler. "I give them my utmost respect. You can't see this degree of widespread dedication among any other fan group. More of them [are] more hard-core than any other group."

Bresler is currently editing *Otaku Unite!* and has plans for a late summer release. "We're going to ride the festival circuit," he noted. You can check the progress of the film and when it's coming to your town on www.otakuunite.com. However, it doesn't *star* you, it's still *about* you. ■ Robert Brenner



SILENT RUNNING

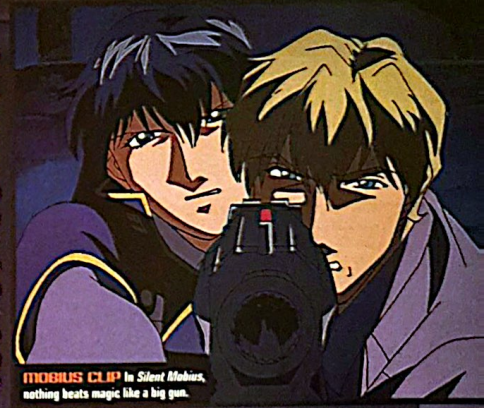
BY TOM ROOT

HAS THE CREATOR OF *SILENT MOBIUS* FORSAKEN JAPAN FOR *STAR WARS, BATMAN* AND MARVEL COMICS? SUPERSTAR KIA ASAMIYA DEFENDS HIS LOVE OF NEW YORK CITY TO 'ANIME INVASION.'

Nobody can ever accuse Kia Asamiya of making boring career choices. The veteran manga and anime creator isn't satisfied sticking to a single genre. And lately, he isn't even satisfied sticking to a single *country*.

Asamiya, whose best-known manga work stateside includes *Silent Mobius*, *Dark Angel* and *Steam Detectives*, was thrust into the American comics spotlight with his manga adaptation of *Star Wars: Episode I* in 1999. He parlayed that success into assignments for Marvel and DC Comics, drawing Batman as well as doing covers for *Iron Man*, *Fantastic Four* and *X-Men: Evolution*. Last year, Asamiya shocked the Japanese comics industry by moving from Tokyo to New York City, a move seen by some as scandalous.

Anime Invasion asked Asamiya for his thoughts on this and more. The legendarily reclusive Asamiya delivered, proving outspoken, opinionated and anything but boring.



MOBIUS CLIP In *Silent Mobius*, nothing beats magic like a big gun.

ANIME INVASION: First things first. Why dd you move to America?

KIA ASAMIYA: I moved to New York on a trial basis. I wanted to try it out, see what it would be like doing the same job but in a different country and culture.

The move got quite the reaction from your fans.

I guess it was controversial. Everyone thought I was crazy.

Why's that?

They thought I was turning my back on Japan and the industry here. They didn't realize I was going to continue to work from America. With modern conveniences like FedEx and the internet, this is totally possible from anywhere in the world; it doesn't matter where you live. My editors were concerned that they couldn't come knocking on my door when I was running late to make sure I was working. [*Laughs*]

Scanned with CamScanner

Now that you're here, what do you think of New York City?

Before coming here, I perceived New York as a big, cold city; unfriendly and nameless. That couldn't be farther from the truth. New York is such a warm and welcoming place. I came to New York for a week before starting the Batman manga. I heard Bob Kane based Gotham on NYC, so I came to familiarize myself with the city. That's when I fell in love with it.

Would you ever move back to Japan?

I still have my main studio in Japan. My family is here. My ties with Japan will never be entirely cut. I do see America as the best place for me, though. But who knows? As I get older maybe I will split my time between both countries.

What's the best part about living in America?

The best? I find it is more relaxing than living in Tokyo.

What's the worst?

Not being able to completely understand people.

How did you first get involved working on American comics?

A number of factors came together about three or four years ago. Many of my Japanese manga were being reprinted in the States at that time: *Silent Mobius*, *Dark Angel*, *Steam Detectives* and *Nadesico*. I wasn't happy just having my Japanese work reprinted in English and wanted to do something original for the U.S. market. That was when I met C.B. Cebulski [of Central Park Media, Fanboy Entertainment and now Associate Editor at Marvel Comics] at San Diego Comic Con in 1997. He has been a big help in getting me work at most of the U.S. publishers. Then, while I had C.B. helping me in the States, many Japanese publishers contacted me about working on manga versions of American comics for them. I did a *Hellboy* pin-up, I did the *Star Wars: Episode I* manga and I did *Batman*. Then at the same time, Image wanted to do an original *Dark Angel* series, so that landed here in the States as well.

That's a lot of different publishers.

I never want to tie myself down to one publisher. Many Japanese artists are exclusive to one company. I never have been. When I came to the States, I kept the same attitude. I guess I'm doing okay, as I have now had work published by Marvel, DC, Dark Horse and Image.

Is this career where you always pictured yourself?

Since I was young, I think. I would doodle and draw when I was a kid, and when I realized that people had to work for living, I decided I wanted to draw to make money.

What manga was available back then?

I loved manga by Osamu Tezuka (*Astro Boy*, *Black Jack*) and Shotaro Ishinomori (*Cyborg 009*).

Did you receive formal art training?

I went to art/animation school. But now I wish I didn't. What they teach in art school is too structured. Once I got a job in the animation industry, I had to quickly unlearn everything they had taught me.

Then do you think art schools aren't a good idea for young artists?

Young artists should be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. They should also try to develop a style of their own and not simply emulate the style of others.

Art schools, at least those in Japan, are mostly run by people who tell you what worked for them. But what worked for them may not work anymore. If it was still working, why are the teachers teaching and not still working in anime and manga?

Well, *you're* working in manga. What makes your stuff work so well?

I really have no idea. I ask myself that sometimes. Maybe it's the diversity of my styles. Maybe it's diversity in the content of my manga. I have always tried to keep up with changes in the industry and stay ahead of the

BABE MAGNATE: Kia's two biggest U.S. works feature pretty girls: *Episode I*'s Amidala (above) and *Dark Angel*'s Leen (right).

VITAL STATS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT KIA ASAMIYA

BORN: Tokyo, 1963

BASE OF OPERATIONS: Tokyo, New York

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: *Gunhed*, *Silent Mobius* (manga and anime), *Mobius Klein*, *Compiler*, *Assembler*, *Dark Angel*, *Steam Detectives* (manga and anime), *Dark Angel: Phoenix Resurrection*, *Gacha Gacha Evil-Kun*, *Star Wars: Episode I*, *Batman: Child of Dreams*, covers for Marvel, DC and Dark Horse

FAVORITE MANGA/COMICS: *Hellboy*. "Mike Mignola's work is simply amazing. He has been a big influence on me."

FAVORITE TV SHOW: Japanese comedy programs. "They always make me laugh and forget about work for a while when I need a break."

FAVORITE MOVIE: Too many to list. *Star Wars*, *Batman*, *Blade Runner*, *Aliens* to name a few.

HIS BIGGEST SECRET: "One of the biggest reasons I moved to the States was so I could get my hands on Dr. Pepper more easily." ■ TR

KIA ASAMIYA'S
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ROUGH STUFF

A PEEK INSIDE KIA ASAMIYA'S SKETCHBOOK

HONEST TOM "One of the reasons I like working with American editors is that they are honest with you. With the new *Fantastic Four* cover I did for Marvel (left), editor Tom Brevoort was very clear he really didn't like my first sketch, and he told me why. This is the final version we went with."

PRINTING ERROR "I forget what this piece (right) was originally produced for, but it was later used for a Wizard World Exclusive sketchbook. I tried to incorporate the entire cast of all my manga in this one. I also tried to give it a circular, spinning feel using capes, wings and steam. That little 'Now Printing' sign is me."

GIMME STEAM "This was a poster for the San Diego Comic Con a few years back. They wanted a group shot of all my *Steam Detectives* characters in a montage of sorts (left). I took the piece with me and painted it in my hotel room at Wizard World in three days between panels and parties."

TUX AND GO "A party was being thrown for me in Japan to celebrate my 10th anniversary as a pro manga artist. It was going to be a formal party so I thought it would be a cool idea to dress up all my characters as if they were attending (right)." ■ TR

curve. This has helped me greatly, I believe.

What do you think of as the highlight of your career?

There have been many. Illustrating the *Star Wars: Episode I* manga was a definite highlight. A *big* highlight. Doing the Batman manga was another highlight. The Episode I manga must have caught a lot of new fans' attention.

I think it was more helpful for my popularity in America than in Japan. In Japan, the *Episode I* manga was targeted more for kids. In America it seems to have been purchased more by adults. It is still one of the things fans talk to me most about at comic cons. I think it broke me out of the "manga bubble" many U.S. comic fans seem to have had me in.

Bandai's going to be promoting your existing *Silent Mobius* work this summer. Are you going to be a part of that push?

Yes, but mostly from a coordination standpoint. There will be all kinds of cross-promotion with Viz, who does the manga versions, and ToyCom, who's releasing the action figures. I should be at the summer cons promoting it all.

Describe *Silent Mobius* to your new fans.

It's a cyberpunk police story about a team of female cops with supernatural powers. Kind of like *Blade Runner* meets *Charlie's Angels*.

Any new *Silent Mobius* material on the way?

A new *Silent Mobius* series, *Silent Mobius Tales*, begins this summer. It's the first new *Silent Mobius* manga I've done in almost three years. This will lead into my new *Silent Mobius Neo* manga in 2003.

I'm also working on *Steam Detectives*, *Dark Angel: Phoenix Resurrection* (which is continuing in Japan even though it's on hiatus here) and there is a lot of cover work and other side projects I am doing.

What's your daily routine like?

I only sleep 4 or 5 hours a day. I work until like 5 or 6 in the morning, sleep, and I'm then back at the drawing board or computer at 9 or 10 a.m. the next day.

Good lord. What do you do for *fun*?

My life is mostly work. That is my fun. But I love cars and love to drive. I also collect movie props and spend a lot of my time searching the Net for rare props from movies like *Batman*, *Aliens* and *Star Wars*.

Do you watch any anime on American TV?

I do. I love *The Powerpuff Girls*. I have gotten really into American cartoons, like *Samurai Jack* and *Justice League*. They have Cartoon Network in Japan now, too, so my son loves *Dexter's Laboratory* and my daughter is a *PPG* junkie like her dad.

What's the one thing you'd like to say to your American fans?

Thank you. I really could not have done this without my fans here and your support of my work. ■

Tom Root couldn't have written [illegible] without the help of C.B. Cebulski. Tom's [illegible] nothing to do with it.

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CHILD'S PLAY Clockwise from upper left, 14-year-olds Asuka, Shinji and Rei are mankind's last hope against the Angels itself.

TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL

BY JONATHAN CLEMENTS

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT NEON GENESIS EVANGELION, THE GREATEST ANIME SERIES NO ONE CAN UNDERSTAND

Sometimes, heaven isn't on your side.

Earth is under attack from divine super-beings called Angels. They will kill us for the chance to *be* us. Our last hope is a team of suicidal bio-weapons called EVAs, piloted by traumatized 14-year-old kids, supervised by a government organization called NERV... run by a madman. And it's all been prophesied by God.

Neon Genesis Evangelion was a huge hit on Japanese TV in 1995 with its incredible story of a war between man and Angels, but it's that same religious storyline that's kept it from American airwaves. "*Evangelion* has all the makings of a hit," says John Ledford of ADV Films, whose videos and DVDs have created legions of fans. "But it could be much bigger if American TV networks weren't so 'touchy' about religious themes."

"Few anime titles in the last decade have had such immense impact," agrees Manga Entertainment's Marvin Gleicher. "With a highly personal story that resonates on a deeply emotional level, *Evangelion* breathed new life into the 'Giant Robot' formula."

But *Evangelion*, with its highly complicated plot and symbolic story-telling style, has left many fans confused and some new anime fans scared. But it's so good everyone wants to know what the heck it all means! Now, *Anime Invasion* answers all the questions and solves all the mysteries to one of the greatest anime series of all time. Ready? There's no turning back...

ANGELS? THEY FIGHT ANGELS IN THIS SHOW?

The Angels are lifeforms with the same potential as humanity—meaning any of them could have inherited the Earth instead of us—sent to wipe the Earth clean by an unknown source. This is what gives *Evangelion* its monster-of-the-week angle, as NERV sends out the EVAs to stop the attacking Angels. There are 18 Angels in all, with the Third Angel Sachiel attacking in *Evangelion*'s first episode. Angels can be vaguely humanoid or ethereal spirits; the weirder ones include the giant spider-thing Matariel, who drips acid from his eyes; the huge floating octahedron Ramiel, who attacks with a giant drill; and the zebra-striped sphere Leliel, which is really a "shadow" of an Angel in a completely different dimension. And they've all been hell-bent on killing us since the Second Impact on September 13, 2000.

THE SECOND IMPACT? WHAT'S THAT?

The Dead Sea Scrolls prophesied that mankind would

PLUGGED IN Rei Ayanami feels weird piloting her EVA, because they were both created from an Angel.

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Cross your heart

A GUIDE TO RELIGIOUS ICONS IN *EVANGELION*

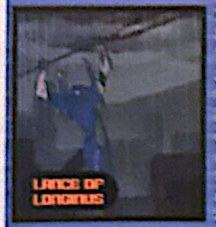
LOST GOSPELS

The Dead Sea Scrolls are lost manuscripts of early Christian and Jewish sects, discovered in 1948 in a cave in Israel. In *Evangelion*, they predict the Angel attacks and the death of humanity.

EX-WIFE FROM HELL

In Jewish folklore, Lilith was Adam's first mate, divorced due to "irreconcilable differences." God had to jury-rig a new wife out of Adam's rib. Later found in a giant underground cavern beneath Japan. Bad news.

ROMAN HOLY DAY



Longinus was the half-blind Roman legionary whose job was to ensure Jesus Christ died on the Cross. When his eyes were healed when some of Christ's blood landed on him, he recognized that this was the Son of God after all, and became a preacher. His lance, which killed Jesus, became a magical relic that was rediscovered by agents of SEELE in 2002.

TREE OF LIFE

The Jewish Kabbalist Tree can be seen on the opening credit montage and Gendo Ikari's office floor. Based on the writings of the 16th century Jewish mystics, Kabbalist mythology includes the concept of the coming of the divine light in all of us, followed by the destruction of humanity in a single catastrophic event. —JC

be destroyed in a Second Impact (the First Impact is never identified). In *Evangelion*, we're told—like humanity is—that the Second Impact was a catastrophic meteorite strike on Antarctica, resulting in the melting of the polar ice cap, the drowning of much low-lying land, and the deaths of more than half the world's population. Later on, this turns out to be a cover-up. The Second Impact was actually set off by humans in Antarctica—but in order to *prevent* the worldwide massacre of mankind. Since the Angels were prophesied to come and destroy mankind, we forced Adam (the First Angel) to manifest prematurely, and thus were able to reduce the damage of the Second Impact. It may have been the worst cataclysm to strike the Earth in 4 billion years, but it was the *lesser* of two evils. Adam was reduced to embryonic form and taken to be studied, but the leaders of mankind knew that other Angels would soon be on their way, as prophesied by the Scrolls. If any one of them made contact with Lilith (the Second Angel, hidden in a cavern in Japan), the Angels would win and mankind would be destroyed.

WELL, SHOOT. HOW CAN WE STOP THEM?

An agency was formed to combat the Angels, NERV, led by scientists Gendo Ikari and Kozo Fuyutsuki, who began to work on the Evangelion project. Using research gleaned from Adam and the Second Impact, NERV created biomechanical defenses against the upcoming Angel attacks—namely, the EVAs. Gendo's wife, Yui, lost her life during the project, and her soul actually ended up merging with EVA Unit 01. Since the EVAs were made from Angels—like Eve was made from Adam (get it?)—only they had the powers to fight the Angels and win. However, if left uncontrolled, the EVAs might try to destroy mankind themselves, since in effect they were part Angel. Luckily, NERV found a way to enslave them totally, but that meant the EVAs needed pilots in order to function and fight.

WHO ARE THE PILOTS?

Oh right, yes. Only those born in the Aftermath of the Second Impact seem to have what it takes, meaning they have to be 14 years old. These include Gendo and Yui's shy son Shinji (who pilots the EVA with his mom in it!), and the arrogant Asuka, who's three-quarters German and whose mom committed suicide while working on the EVA project.

The first, and weirdest, pilot is Rei Ayanami, a blue-haired, red-eyed girl who is quiet and solitary, and seems to exist for no other reason but to pilot her EVA. In fact, she is a creature cloned in part from Yui, and is thus Shinji's kind-of mother-sister, although he doesn't know it! Though Rei is a clone of Yui, her soul is that of Lilith, the Second Angel—but this is only discovered by Kaoru, the 17th Angel, shortly before Shinji pops off his head like a Pez dispenser. This allows Rei to develop Angelic powers, and gives her considerable influence over the final outcome of the series.

OKAY, SO IF WE STOP THE ANGELS, IS HUMANITY SAVED?

That's the real trick, isn't it? Sadly, no. Humanity is doomed one way or another, and preventing the Angels from winning is just one phase of averting the ultimate disaster. See, humanity has reached the limits of its evolution and is going to end anyway, even if the Angels don't do it. But NERV (and its former boss, the super-secret SEELE organization) has been secretly

ANGEL FOOD Shinji, in EVA Unit 01 (right), handily takes care of the third Angel.

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working on a new stage of evolution, through the Human Instrumentality Project. If the other Angels are successfully fought off, and the 18th Angel (Humanity) is able to unify Adam and Lilith, humanity has the chance to meld into one massive Group Mind called the Instrumentality. And other than SEELE and the top few in NERV, no one knows a thing about it...

But SEELE and NERV disagree over how to achieve the Instrumentality—violently. SEELE wants to kill everyone first and hopes it'll all work out in the afterlife.

NERV, led by Gendo, has another idea, using Rei (who has Lilith's soul) and the embryonic form of Adam. Gendo Ikari has picked option two because it will get his dead wife back...he hopes.

GOOD LORD. SO HOW'S IT END?

That's a long story. See, the *Neon Genesis Evangelion* TV series had 26 episodes and ended. In episode 24, after a massive fight set to the tune of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (the famous "Ode to Joy"), Shinji destroys the 17th Angel.

Whether they ran out of money, time or just had a crazy ending planned from the first, the last two TV episodes—25 and 26—stopped the regular plot, and followed the very surreal adventures of Shinji in the Human Instrumentality Project. The scenes went from animation, to re-used animation, to production sketches...even some live-action stuff was used.

Very few people understood it, and many fans clamored for an ending that answered all the questions about the plot and what happened to the characters.

So three theatrically released movies where made. *Death* was a summary of the first 24 TV episodes (a common practice in Japan). *Rebirth*, released with *Death*, was a new episode 25, and the first 45 minutes of the new finale. Then, finally, *The End of Evangelion* was released, wrapping up the series as it was supposedly intended.

And it still didn't make sense. Director Hideaki Anno's ultimate answer was "*Evangelion* is a puzzle...find your own answers."

Which was no help at all. Which is why we've explained both endings for you in the sidebar.

But if you want your own answers, *Death and Rebirth* and *End of Evangelion* are finally released in the USA this July and September, respectively, courtesy of Manga Entertainment. And ADV Films is kindly re-releasing the entire TV series in a super-duper boxed DVD set.

Co-author of The Anime Encyclopedia, *freelance writer Jonathon Clements knows everything about Evangelion. Except why Misato drinks Yebisu beer instead of delicious Asahi Super Dry. It's super dry! Thanks to Paul Corrigan, Marvin Gleicher, John Lenhard, Danny Payne and Matt Perrier.*

the big finish

THE TWO ENDINGS OF EVANGELION

Whatever happened behind the scenes, the last two episodes of *Evangelion* TV series were controversially abstract. The movie that remade them wasn't abstract, but equally bizarre. Feel free to pick the ending of your own choice.

THE TV VERSION

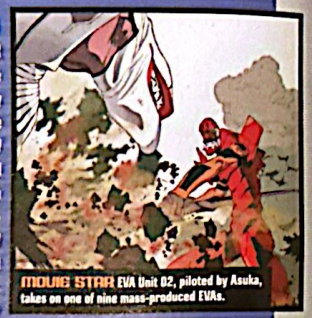
The TV version shows us what the Instrumentality of Man looks like from the inside, as we witness the disintegration of one individual in particular into the Group Mind of Instrumentality. What do you know, the individual in question is Shinji.

Since the focus of *Evangelion* was always more on the characters and the human dilemma of the necessity of others, the TV show gives more of a psychological answer. Shinji, always too afraid of being hurt to open up to others, or of failing others and being rejected, resists joining the Instrumentality.

But by the end, Shinji realizes that it's okay to be himself and he is welcomed into the fold by his fellow souls. We know they're souls, because the dead and mutilated characters all seem to be whole again. Hooray. We're all together. We're all one big... happy... family...

THE MOVIE VERSION

The movie version is supposed to take place at the same time—we see what's really going on during the whole internal Shinji-stuff of the TV version. SEELE is determined to take control, and sends in their troops, who kill everyone they can find at NERV headquarters. They also send in nine pilotless mass-production EVAs, which defeat Asuka. When Shinji tries to rescue her, the Third Impact occurs.


MOVIE STAR EVA Unit 02, piloted by Asuka, takes on one of nine mass-produced EVAs.

Gendo brings Adam and the original Lilith together, hoping to control the impact. But he needs Rei to get to Lilith, and Rei refuses—instead, merging with Lilith herself and becoming the giant, planet-sized Angel of Death. Everyone dies, and Mankind merges into one single Group Mind in Rei—each of them seeing their heart's desire at the moment of immersion.

But Shinji, the last to be absorbed, [illegible] this Instrumentality stuff is a load of bull and that it's [illegible]. He chooses real life as an individual, with all the [illegible] entail, over the Instrumentality. The glowing [illegible] up into space, while other souls collapse [illegible] materializes amid the ruins and starts strangling [illegible] ary that she always rejected him. But then [illegible] ke his long-dead mother, and he stops [illegible] y Earth, she says, "This feels weird." The [illegible]

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LAST MAN STANDING

A BATTLE YOU NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D SEE

RANMA SAOTOME VS. YAGYU JUBEI II

Ranma Saotome	REAL NAME	Jiyu Nanohana
16	AGE	15
Pondering Panda	FATHER FIGURE	Narcoleptic novelist
Ryoga Hibiki	GRUDGE	Ryujojo Daigo
Tea Kettle	FASHION ACCESSORY	Lovely Eyepatch

RANMA BIO: While practicing martial arts at the mysterious Chinese training ground Jusenkyo, Genma Saotome and his son Ranma fell victim to the springs' horrible curses. Whenever each of them gets splashed with cold water, they transform into the last being that drowned in the spring centuries ago. For Ranma, that means a big-breasted, red-haired girl, while his father turns into a giant panda. Thankfully, hot water changes them back.

JUBEI BIO: A new school and interested boys are enough to keep well-endowed Jiyu Nanohana busy. When a strange samurai approaches her in the woods claiming Jiyu's the chosen successor of Japan's greatest swordsman Yagyu Jubei, things get crazy. Jubei's powers/skills are passed on when Nanohana dons the magical "Lovely Eyepatch." Now as Jubei-chan, this powerful ninja girl must fight off assassins to end a 300-year grudge.

THE BATTLE BEGINS

Hearing tales of a ninja girl capable of removing curses, Ranma and his father venture to find her. The two investigate the Hontsuru Jr. High School, and stumble upon a massive swordfight. Amidst two-dozen ninja stands a katana-wielding girl with a heart-shaped eyepatch over her left eye.

"She has to be the one," says Ranma. "I've got to help her so she can cure us!"

Jumping into the center of the fray, Ranma suddenly realizes that everyone's been knocked out except for Jubei. Before he can even get a word in the ninja girl leaps toward him.

"Don't you Ryujoji ever quit?" she screams as her blade nearly cuts Ranma in half.

Mistaken for Jubei's sworn enemy, Ranma quickly tries explaining his situation. His pleas fall on deaf ears as Jubei continues to strike. Barely two steps ahead of her, Ranma suddenly turns and counterattacks with a swift kick to Jubei's hand, knocking her sword loose.

Jubei charges after Ranma with a series of fast and furious punches, elbows, jabs and kicks. Ranma blocks many of them, but those that get through really knock him for a loop. Outmatched, Ranma catches his panda father munching on some bamboo and devises a plan before running off into the bamboo forest.

Grabbing her sword and chasing after him, Jubei leaps at Ranma just as he dives into a nearby lake. Coming up for air, the ninja girl glances around for her foe, only to come face to face with a somewhat familiar-looking red-haired girl.

"Hah! She'll never recognize me now," thinks the female Ranma as (s)he prepares to punch out the confused Jubei.

Almost instinctively avoiding Ranma's attack, Jubei lets loose full-force with the flat-edge of her blade.

THE WINNAH:

Jubei drags the unconscious Ranma to safety on the lake's shore, and looks around for her original enemy. Finding no one else, she takes off her eyepatch and transforms back to the innocent Miss Nanohana.

"I don't know what happened to that pony-tailed boy," she mutters. "But I wish he'd come back. He was kinda cute!"

Month's battle drawn by ADAM WARREN

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REANIMETED

CLASSIC ANIME FROM DAYS OF YORE:

VOLTRON

From days of long ago...from uncharted regions of the universe...comes a legend...the legend of Voltron, Defender of the Universe!

For most American fans, this legend began in the fall of 1984, when a company called World Events Productions unleashed *Voltron: Defender of the Universe* in syndication. The series was actually two separate storylines, thinly connected, and each with its own set of characters and its own version of "Voltron." One was an invincible robot formed by merging 15 smaller space vehicles. The other, and by far the more popular, was the "Lion Voltron" which was created when five robot lions combined into a larger superbot. The *true* legend of Voltron, however, began in Japan.

ASIAN ORIGINS

In 1981, the Toei company, one of the leaders in the Japanese animation market, premiered *King of One Hundred Beasts Golion*. At that time in the post-*Star Wars* era, most Nipponese SF animation was more concerned with space opera motifs than giant robots. *Golion*, however, belonged to a small but popular sub-genre: the "combo" giant robot, a mechanical warrior who was formed when several smaller vehicles or robots linked together.

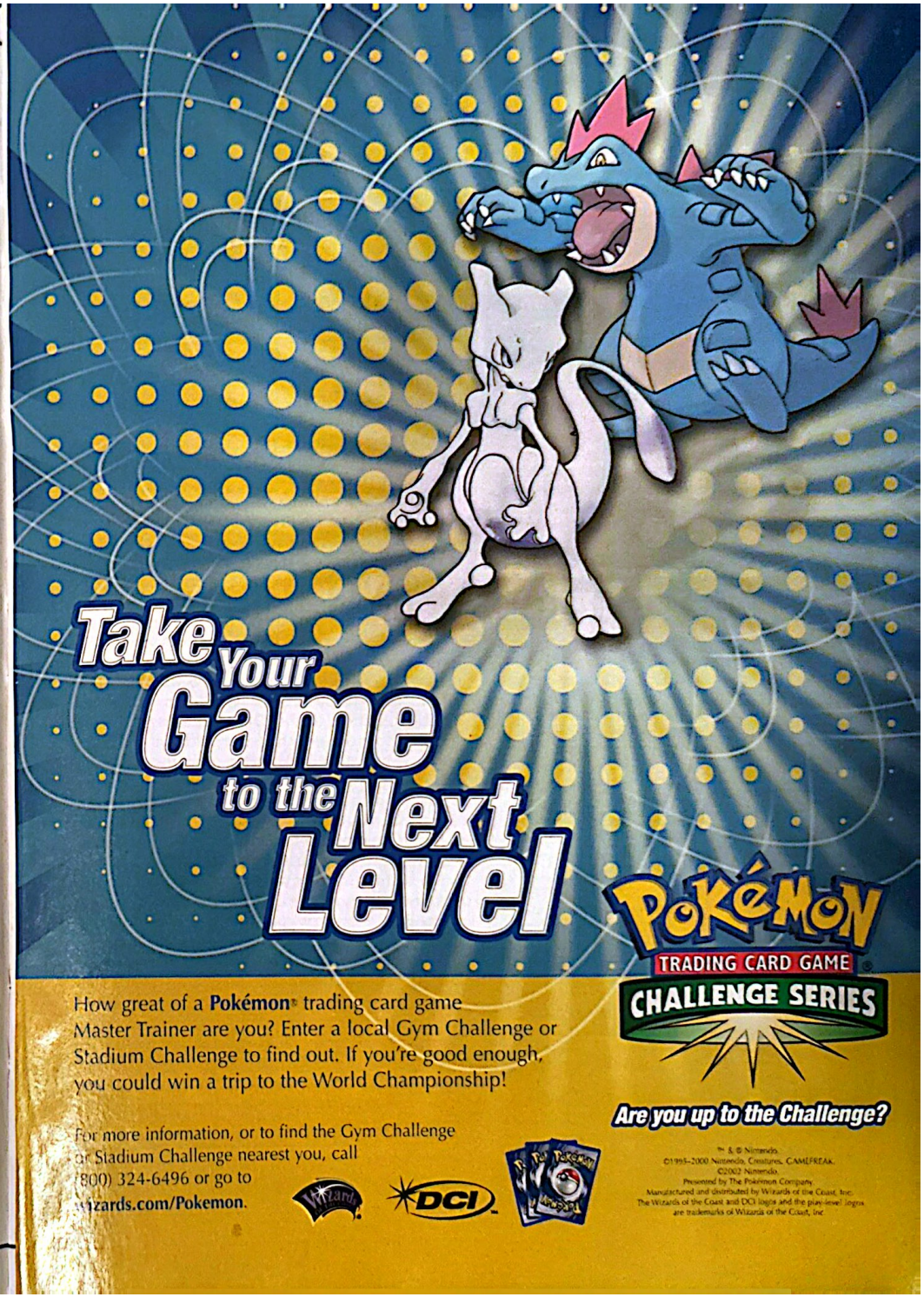
Golion's 52 episodes told the story of how most of the known universe had fallen under the evil Galra Empire, headed by Emperor Dybarzal and his equally power-hungry son Prince Sinclaine. Five survivors of a devastated Earth escape Dybarzal and encounter Princess Fala of the planet Altea, currently under attack by the Galra forces. It's there that they learn of the legendary robot Golion.

Golion stood 60 meters, flew at mach 10 and possessed an impressive array of weapons, the most powerful being a laser sword that nothing could withstand. It was long ago split into five separate units, which were hidden throughout Altea. Naturally, the five heroes succeed in bringing Golion back.

The other *Voltron* story arc would be made up from Toei's *Armored Squadron Dairugger XV*, which featured the 15-member "Rugger" squad and their struggle against the evil Galbeston Empire. The squad was broken into three teams of five: Air, Ground and Marine. Each team member piloted his own vehicle, and could link up with the other four vehicles in his or her unit to produce an even larger war machine. When things got really tough, all 15 vehicles would combine into the giant warrior robot Dairugger XV.

KITTY LITTER Five mouths to feed...that's a lot of cat food for Voltron.

LION VOLTRON © SHOUTING STAR, VOLTRON © WORLD EVENTS PRODUCTIONS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Remember Sven

The truth about Voltron Force's lost member

Everyone knows the story of Sven, right? He was the original pilot of the Blue Lion, fighting alongside Keith and the others until a battle injury forced him to turn over his duties to Princess Allura. By the end of the series, his wounds had healed and he returned for the final battles, even going man-to-man with Lotor. Well, that's the story if you've only seen the Americanized *Voltron: Defender of the Universe*. Things went a little differently in *Golion*, the Japanese original. In Japan, the Sven character's name was Takashi Shirogane, and he wasn't just injured in that early episode. He was killed. That's right, dead as a doornail. It's his younger *brother* Sho who's in the final episodes, and he's the one who beats the crap out of Sincláine (Lotor) in the climactic battle. And by the way, they *both* die in the original! (*Voltron* has them fall into water and survive). In this case, the American version is probably preferable. I mean, who do you respect more: a guy who gets injured and later returns for some payback, or a loser who buys it early on and then has to be avenged by his kid brother? ■ BM

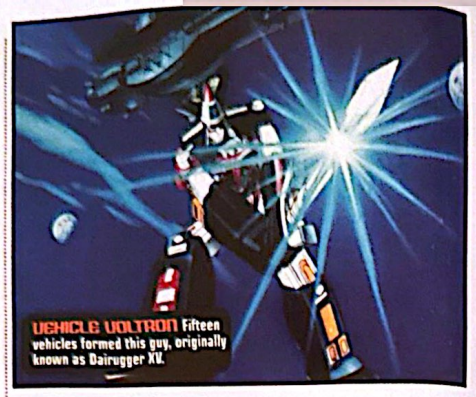
The Lost Series

Albegas: The Voltron That Never Was

Most Voltron fanatics know there were, in fact, *two* Voltrons. Some are even familiar with the Japanese shows that spawned them. But not everyone knows that *Voltron: Defender of the Universe* came close to being a trilogy. WEP had considered adding a "Gladiator Voltron" to their lineup. This Voltron's adventures would have been culled from Toei's 1983 series *Light Speed Electro-God Albegas*. While it's not clear how it would have been worked into the *Voltron* mythos over here, *Albegas*' Japanese exploits went as follows:

Professor Mizuki creates three giant robots to protect the Earth from the invading insect-like Dellinger aliens. Called Alpha, Beta and Gamma, they can unite into a variety of combination robots and vehicles, the most powerful being a huge, gladiator-type warrior called Super Albegas. Alpha, Beta and Gamma are piloted by Daisaku Enjoji, Tetsuya Jin and Hotaru Mizuki, respectively.

The reasons why WEP scrapped this idea remain vague. Perhaps, with "Lion Voltron" already outperforming its vehicle counterpart in the states, it was felt a third Voltron would be even less popular, or not needed at all. Strangely, though, some Albegas toys ended up in the Matchbox assortment, offering at least a glimpse of "the Voltron that never was." ■ BM



VEHICLE VOLTRON Fifteen vehicles formed this guy, originally known as Dairugger XV.

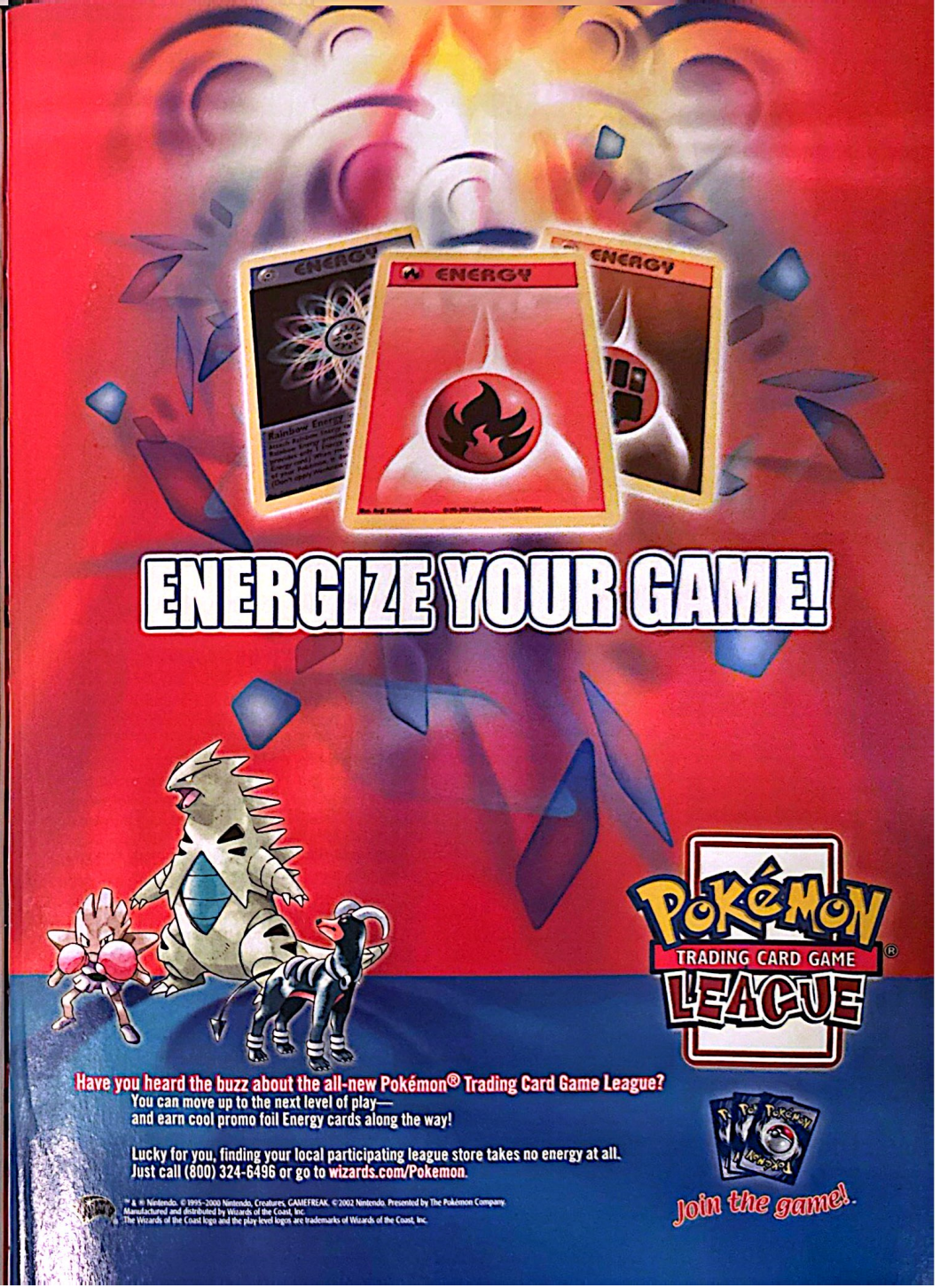
MELTING POT

Combining the two shows went relatively smoothly. When the series began in 1984, the re-named Golion was Voltron of the Far Universe, protecting the planet Arus from evil King Zarkon and his son Prince Lotor. The five pilots, Keith, Lance, Sven, Pidge and Hunk, were now agents of the Galaxy Alliance sent to aide Princess Allura of Arus. Closer to home, Dairugger XV became the Voltron of the Near Universe, fighting to save Earth and her allies from the nasty alien Drules. One of the pilots of this Voltron Force is mentioned as having a relative in the "Lion" Voltron Force, while a later episode of the "Lion" series reveals that King Zarkon is a renegade Drule, who set out to make his own conquests!

Voltron: Defender of the Universe (well, Lion Voltron, anyway) was such a runaway hit that WEP requested a second season from Toei, so for the first time, a Japanese anime was created exclusively for the American market. Unfortunately, Toei farmed out the 20-episode sequel to a Korean animation company, and the end product was of a lower caliber. *Voltron* stuck around in reruns for the remainder of the '80s, and then, in 1989, WEP had Toei piece together a one-hour "original" movie. Titled *Voltron: The Fleet of Doom*, it united both the Lion and Vehicle robots against the combined attack of the Drule super-fleet and a new super ro-beast, piloted by Prince Lotor. Thrown together quickly by Toei, much of the footage was from various *Golion* and *Dairugger* episodes, with the new scenes of a quality even below that of *Voltron*'s second season. It turned out to be a disappointing wrap-up to the saga.

Voltron: Defender of the Universe itself refused to die, however. In 1997, the Cartoon Network re-ran the first season, and then showed the second season under the title *The New Adventures of Voltron*. This generated enough interest for WEP to dust off the property and produce an all-new, totally CGI series called *Voltron: The Third Dimension* in 1998. All three titles can still be found in reruns, with shouts of "I'll form the head!" being heard in homes across the country. ■ BM

New Jersey-based freelancer Bob Mar[illegible]sred into the abyss, but did not find his keys.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DRAWN TOGETHER

By Helen McCarthy

THE TOP 10 HOTTEST LOVE STORIES IN ANIME

All the world loves a love story, and anime is no exception. One of the best things about anime is how each series has *something* for everybody. Unlike American comics, anime isn't just action, violence, superheroes or giant robots—anime can be about anything. Most of the time, it's everything at once!

And what anime does better than just about anything else is romance. These people know how to tell love stories, and they know how to make us fall in love with characters and how to make those characters fall in love. Given how good these stories are, even boys have been getting in on the action, with action-packed romances like *Ranma 1/2* and the sci-fi soap opera *Robotech* boasting a ton of fans of both genders.

So we've picked the 10 Best Couples in all anime-dom. Not just for the ladies, but for everybody.

IN THIS CORNER Ayeka (left) and Ryoko battle for Tenchi's affection.

10 THREE'S COMPANY

Tenchi, Ayeka and Ryoko in a romantic-comedy triangle that has sharp edges in *Tenchi Muyo!*

Tenchi Masaki is just another quiet teenager until he releases the imprisoned spirit of an ancient galactic criminal from the family shrine. Ryoko is a hot-headed, hot-blooded... just *hot* space pirate who falls in love with Tenchi when he accidentally frees her. Ryoko's ancestral enemy Ayeka, prim and proper princess of a distant planet, pursues her to Earth and falls for Tenchi too. As Tenchi discovers that his family isn't quite what it seems, more and more girls literally drop from the skies to turn his home into a harem, causing comic cosmic chaos. Tenchi merely tries to be friendly and ends up with the female half of the galaxy in love with him. But the real war is between Ryoko and Ayeka as they fight for Tenchi's affection—a war full of heartache, tender moments, indecision...and property damage!

FEEL IT: Poor Tenchi just can't choose between wild Ryoko and the elegant Ayeka, nor can his many fans. Sweet and a little sad—just like the real thing.

CAPTURE IT: The original series, TV series and movie are available from Pioneer, and there're multiple spin-offs including cuddly toys.

FLOWER POWER It takes a long time for Godai and Kyoko's romance to bloom, but it blossoms beautifully.

9 HOUSE MATES

Yusaku Godai & Kyoko Otonashi find an everyday love can be sweetest in the *Maison Ikkoku*

One of anime's most magical romances, set squarely in the everyday world of a 1980s Tokyo boarding house. Kyoko, widowed tragically young, takes a job as manager of Maison Ikkoku to rebuild a life for herself. Despite her family's misgivings, she wants some independence and space to heal. Godai, a hapless college student living at Ikkoku, falls hopelessly in love with her...but what can he offer to replace the husband who was Kyoko's first love, her high school teacher and the man of her dreams? Yusaku becomes determined to prove himself to her, while Kyoko wonders if her feelings for Yusaku are betraying her late husband. Helped and hindered by their crazy fellow residents, two lost souls must travel a long road of confusion and misunderstandings before they realize that friends can be lovers and that perfect happiness can be found in your own apartment building.

FEEL IT: Among the sweetest love stories you'll ever find, all the more unusual for being entirely possible.

CAPTURE IT: Check out the long-running manga or the TV series, available from Viz.

8 SAMURAI SPIRITS

Himura Kenshin & Kamiya Kaoru struggle to keep their love alive in the bloody saga *Rurouni Kenshin* (a.k.a. *Samurai X*)

Kenshin is orphaned in a cholera epidemic in 19th century Japan and becomes a childhood killer, but finally decides to forswear killing and devote his skills to saving people. After a tragic teenage romance, he wanders Japan for ten years, meeting Kaoru (daughter of a swordmaster and no mean fighter) when he saves her from danger. Their love grows slowly through the first 29 episodes of the TV series, and Kenshin finally discovers the joys of a loving relationship; but for this Robin and Marian there's no quiet retreat to the forest. Kenshin finds himself forced to kill to defend those he loves. Kaoru knows how breaking his vow destroys him, and she suffers with him whether he wins or loses. Lots of angst and passion, plus explosive and beautifully choreographed action.

FEEL IT: When the man you love is compelled to kill, hating himself for it, how does your love survive? Blood and passion make an irresistibly epic and beautiful combination.

CAPTURE IT: The videos and movie from ADV films and the TV series from Media Blasters have made Kenshin and Kaoru fan favorites.

HOLD ON TIGHT Kaoru and Kenshin cling to each other in battle-ravaged, 19th century Japan.

7 HEAD OF THE CLASS

Yukino & Arima find that competition is no substitute for true love in *Kare Kano* (a.k.a. *Kareshi Kanojo No Jijou*)

Jealousy and lies push them apart from the beginning—can love bring them together? Yukino Miyazawa seems like the perfect high school student, but she's really a lazy slob—she just puts on a façade of perfection and gets away with it because of her charm and good looks. But new boy Souichirou Arima is even more perfect than she is—and Yukino immediately hates him. But strangely, despite her resentment, she's drawn to him. Then he tells her that he loves her—and tries to blackmail her into loving him! How can these two ever untangle their web of deception and learn to love and trust each other as they really are? Through Yukino's self-awakening, *Kare Kano* shows how love helps us find our true selves and how hiding behind a façade only cuts us off from real happiness.

FEEL IT: Incredibly smart, incredibly cute and with a heart of pure gold. With the director and producers of *Evangelion* behind it, it's got to be good.

CAPTURE IT: Check it out for yourself when The Right Stuf, Inc. releases the TV series on DVD, or get the manga from TokyoPop this summer.

NOT CLOSE ENOUGH For Arima (left) and Yukino (right) to be honest with each other, they have to learn to be honest with themselves first.

6 HOLY ROLLERS

***Oh My Goddess!* loser Keiichi & goddess Belldandy seem an unlikely pair, but prove that love is divine**

Keiichi is bottom dog in his college dorm when he dials a wrong number while trying to get Chinese takeout. He gets his own goddess, Belldandy, instead. She's the ultimate babe, a true friend and devoted sister, and she completely transforms his life, so how can he help loving her? But how could a girl like her love a loser like him? Belldandy's just as slow; not wanting to make Keiichi feel pressured, she lets him set the pace. As they inch toward their first kiss, we feel Keiichi's pain, although we want to shake him and yell "Just tell her you love her, idiot!" And we're happy for them when love finally wins through. The gorgeous art expresses the romantic sweetness of the story to perfection.

FEEL IT: This is pure heart candy! Two people who love each other truly and unselfishly overcome their own shyness and cosmic obstacles. So sweet your teeth will melt.

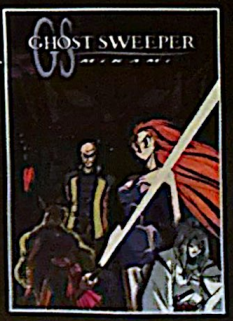
CAPTURE IT: See the short OAV [illegible] from AnimEigo, the movie [illegible] from Pioneer and read [illegible] ongoing manga published [illegible] horse.

CALL COLLECT One misdialed phone number earned Keiichi the lovely goddess Belldandy.

MANGA ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

GS GHOST SWEEPER MIKAMI

EXORCISTS WITH ATTITUDE!



Meet Mikami - the SEXY leader of one of Japan's most successful independent ghost-busting agencies. Together with her eclectic team of exorcists, she's prepared to do battle with any supernatural adversary - but only for the right price!

When an ancient spirit enlists her aid to deal with a re-incarnated foe, Mikami gets more than she bargained for. As the wicked Nosferatu, a vampire lord able to absorb the very life essence of his victims, begins to turn the city's inhabitants into mindless zombies, Mikami's team must race against time to save the world from a second Dark Age.

Watch the ultimate Vampire slayer in this fast, fun and furious supernatural action-adventure!

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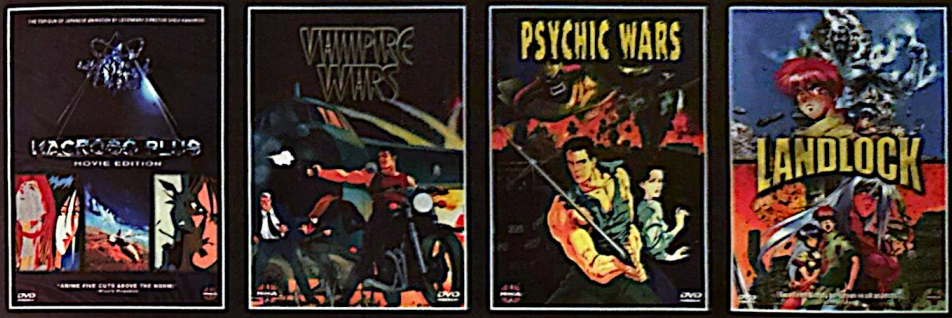

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MANGA VIDEO

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PICTURE PERFECT Ranma and Akane are seen in a rare moment of not making fun of or beating each other up.

5 BOYS AND GIRLS

Gender-afflicted Ranma & volatile Akane fight their way to love, and you'll laugh all the way in *Ranma 1/2*

You think you have problems? High school martial arts hotshot Ranma Saotome ends up as a girl whenever doused with hot water. A really *hot* girl. Cold water turns female Ranma back to male. Ranma's determined to find a cure, but a promise by his dad (who turns into a panda) means he's betrothed to one of the daughters of the Tendo clan. They quickly shunt the duty to youngest sister Akane, who's as good a fighter as Ranma is. She and Ranma behave like complete jerks to each other, as they fight off other suitors and fiancees (their fathers have problems) of both genders! As they both fight off rivals for martial arts supremacy and each other, they gradually realize that maybe, just maybe, they do kind of like each other. But how can they admit it, even to themselves?

FEEL IT: Not the sweetest romance, but surely one of the most entertaining. Full of wacky martial arts and liberal doses of hilarity, inside is a truly great love story.

CAPTURE IT: Viz knew how good *Ranma 1/2* was, so they snapped up the videos, DVDs and comics. Now you can snap them up from them.

4 BITTER SWEET

In *Marmalade Boy*, You & Miki live as brother and sister, but they could be much more...

Miki thinks she has a normal family, until her parents return from a vacation in Hawaii with a new family in tow—and all the parents have traded spouses! Now Miki has two moms, two dads, and a de facto new brother, You—and she hates it all, especially You. But You slowly wins her over with his sweetness, sincerity and charm... but can romance survive the intimacy of everyday life and turn into lasting love? Miki is immature and can be pretty stupid, but her honesty and openness attract the more mature, sensitive You. The series is about the ups and downs of teenage love, so there's romance galore with friends and family, but it's You and Miki we really root for. A romantic classic in Japan.

FEEL IT: It's like *The Brady Bunch* gone crazy! You'll follow Miki's ups and downs as she finds she doesn't feel at all sisterly about her new "brother"!

CAPTURE IT: No videos are available in the USA, but get the new manga from TokyoPop, and the catchy soundtrack is a must-buy.

FORBIDDEN LOVE Yeah, it's a weird premise, but it's weird for You and Miki too!

YOHKO SCARES BUFFY!

THE ANIME HEROINE THAT STARTED THE ADV REVOLUTION IS BACK—
... AND NOW SHE'S ON DVD!

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DEVIL HUNTER Yohko

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3 BOOK OF LOVE

In *Fushigi Yugi*'s land of legend, modern schoolgirl Miaka has all the boys fighting over her...and *then* she has to save the world!

Miaka is an unlikely heroine for this sweeping myth set between two worlds. She is, to put it kindly, greedy, lazy and not very bright. She's also pretty and deeply romantic, and spends much of her time daydreaming. When this ordinary girl opens a magic book and finds herself whisked into a fantasy world as priestess of the Phoenix, she captures the hearts of not one but two hunks; and then somehow has to decide between them! As Miaka eventually realizes Tamahome is her real love, they go through the whole costume-melodrama romance scenario—fights, sacrifices for each other, terrible danger! This beautifully animated epic is more soap opera than *Lord of the Rings*, but you can't deny the great characters, storytelling or incredible emotion in the series.

FEEL IT: Don't let the fantasy throw you off. The emotion is real, the relationships are real. Beautiful, heartbreaking and utterly enthralling.

CAPTURE IT: Get the entire series on video or DVD from Pioneer, with Yu Watase's manga available from Viz.

RIGHT MOVES It takes awhile for Miaka (right) to decide Tamahome's the guy for her—but we know it all along.

THREE'S A CROWD For Rick and Lisa to finally be together, poor Minmei's hopes must be crushed.

2 DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE

In the first saga of *Robotech*, Rick, Minmei and Lisa fight for love and the survival of the human race

An epic tale of alien invasion is merely the backdrop to the greatest romantic triangle in anime. Rick Hunter is a new pilot who falls in love with a young singer, Minmei, after he rescues her from an alien invader. Lisa Hayes is his commanding officer, and Rick's brash attitude immediately puts them in conflict. As Minmei grows famous as a singer and actress, Rick yearns for her more, only to be cast aside. Meanwhile, Lisa falls for Rick, who ignores her in the same way. Rick has to decide what he really wants from life and love. When he finally chooses Lisa, we cheer for them both because we know it's right; yet we can't help feeling for Minmei, because we know stardom is no substitute for love. In a world where all they love is threatened, Rick and Lisa remind us that, in the end, love is all we have.

FEEL IT: Never skimping on the [illegible] tragedies of love, *Macross* is an incredible [illegible] story. Your heart will ache.

CAPTURE IT: See what some have [illegible] the greatest love story of the 20th century in [illegible] re-releases from ADV.

THE FUTURE EXPLODES!

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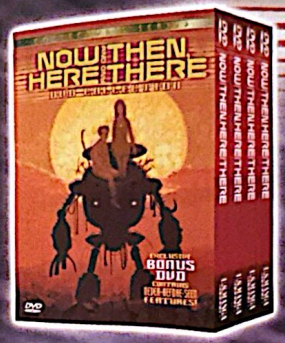

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1 BY MOONLIGHT

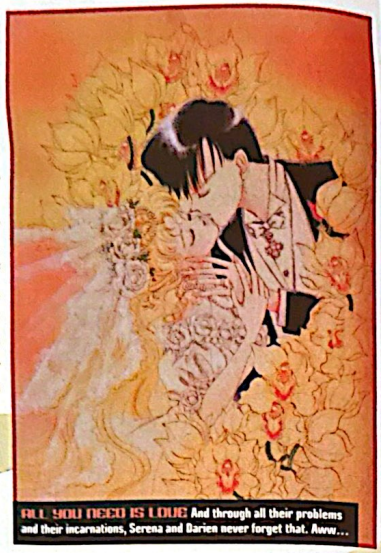
Serena & Darien have loved and lost each other through the ages in the greatest romance of all, Sailor Moon

Sailor Moon is ultimately about the power of love to overcome all evil, even the darkness within ourselves. Every character has to face his or her own weaknesses and petty jealousies before they can be purified in the fire of love. Serena and Darien are typical high school students, but they are also avatars of ancient heroes whose love has been played out through ages of moonlit nights. They are charged to defend Earth from evil. Of course, evil wears strange disguises and can look very seductive, even to them. Their human selves are completely unaware of their destiny as the story begins, but through the long, gracefully plotted, tightly woven arcs of the tale, they remember their former selves and rediscover their feelings for each other. Like normal young lovers they misunderstand each other, mistrust each other, fight and suffer all the miseries and uncertainties of romance gone wrong...yet they are always drawn back to each other. They can love or pretend to hate, but what links them is too strong for indifference—it's *destiny*. Their breakups—and they do break up, because no love is perfect—can be spectacular, and make the romance all the more believable and gripping. Serena is jealous of Darien's affection for other girls. She worries that he'll forget her or meet someone else when he moves on to college, leaving her behind in high school. She worries that her own character flaws will drive him away. They are even parted by death. Yet for these two, only love is forever. To feel over and over again the purity, power and intoxicating sweetness of first love, yet to know the one you love has always been and will always be yours, is a dream all can cherish. In *Sailor Moon*, it's a dream come true.

FEEL IT: If there's a story that's like a first kiss—pure, fresh, deliriously happy, unbelievably amazing and utterly unique—*Sailor Moon* is it.

CAPTURE IT: The manga has been translated by Mixx; ADV will be bringing out the first season DVDs shortly, and Pioneer has the later seasons.

Freelance writer Helen McCarthy didn't write the Book of Love, but she used it as a footnote in the Anime Encyclopedia, *which she co-authored.*



ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE And through all their problems and their incarnations, Serena and Darien never forget that. Awww...

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MASAMUNE SHIROW'S

GUNDRESS

In 2100, the newly built Bayside City serves as Japan's premier international port. The Angel Arms Company is established to help wage war on terrorism with armed security suits. When the mayor is assassinated, the women of Angel Arms are forced to protect the high ranking crime-lord Hassan, in hopes that his information will help bring down a global terror ring.

Gundress marks Anime Works' second release of a theatrical film on DVD, a classic cyberpunk story with character designs by the legendary Masamune Shirow.

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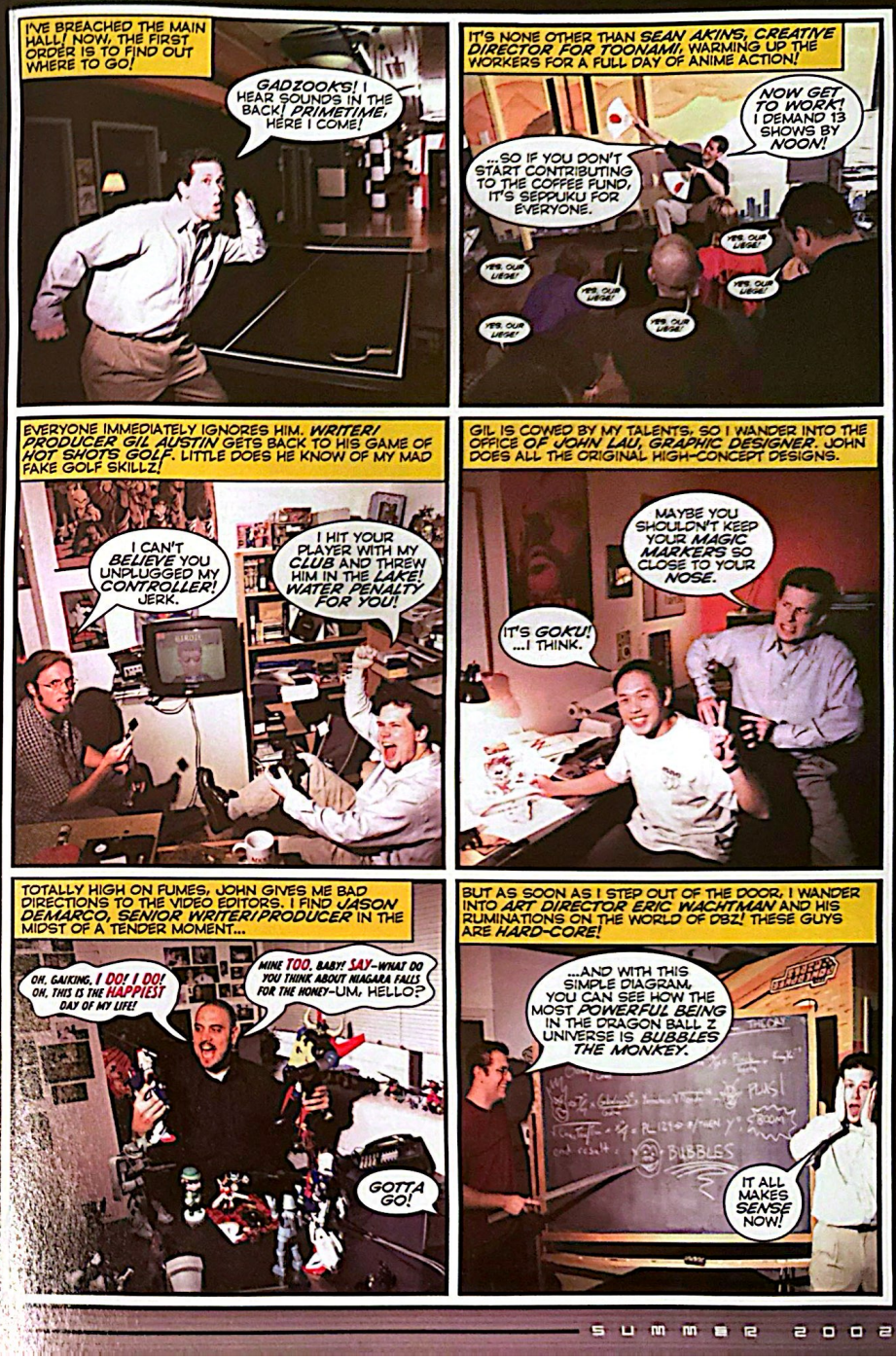
EYE OF THE TOONAMI

BY ROBERT BRICKEN
PHOTOS BY GREG FOSTER

UM...I THINK I'M SUPPOSED TO TELL AN ADULT WHEN YOU DO THAT.
HUSH, YOU LITTLE NAKED BOY! I HAVE EVEN MORE DEVIOUS PLANS AFOOT!
UH... PIKA PIKA?
TOON
FUJI RDPIII

ANIME INVASION TAKES YOU BEHIND THE SCENES OF CARTOON NETWORK'S SECRET TOONAMI HQ...

Ever wondered where all the great anime on TV comes from? Well, the answer is Japan, but it usually makes a pit stop at Toonami, Cartoon Network's hyper-cool, anime-laden programming block! Anime Invasion sent me, Associate Editor Rob B[illegible] ...ow you guys the works—but they didn't know ...igns...as a hard-core *Dragon Ball Z* fan, I ...ize myself forever by getting in *DBZ*!


I'VE BREACHED THE MAIN HALL! NOW, THE FIRST ORDER IS TO FIND OUT WHERE TO GO!
GADZOOKS! I HEAR SOUNDS IN THE BACK! PRIMETIME, HERE I COME!
IT'S NONE OTHER THAN SEAN AKINS, CREATIVE DIRECTOR FOR TOONAMI, WARMING UP THE WORKERS FOR A FULL DAY OF ANIME ACTION!
NOW GET TO WORK! I DEMAND 13 SHOWS BY NOON!
...SO IF YOU DON'T START CONTRIBUTING TO THE COFFEE FUND, IT'S SEPPUKU FOR EVERYONE.
YES, OUR LIEGE!
EVERYONE IMMEDIATELY IGNORES HIM. WRITER/PRODUCER GIL AUSTIN GETS BACK TO HIS GAME OF HOT SHOTS GOLF. LITTLE DOES HE KNOW OF MY MAD FAKE GOLF SKILLZ!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU UNPLUGGED MY CONTROLLER! JERK.
I HIT YOUR PLAYER WITH MY CLUB AND THREW HIM IN THE LAKE! WATER PENALTY FOR YOU!
GIL IS COWED BY MY TALENTS. SO I WANDER INTO THE OFFICE OF JOHN LAU, GRAPHIC DESIGNER. JOHN DOES ALL THE ORIGINAL HIGH-CONCEPT DESIGNS.
MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T KEEP YOUR MAGIC MARKERS SO CLOSE TO YOUR NOSE.
IT'S GOKU! ...I THINK.
TOTALLY HIGH ON FUMES, JOHN GIVES ME BAD DIRECTIONS TO THE VIDEO EDITORS. I FIND JASON DEMARCO, SENIOR WRITER/PRODUCER IN THE MIDST OF A TENDER MOMENT...
OH, GAUKING, I DO! I DO! OH, THIS IS THE HAPPIEST DAY OF MY LIFE!
MINE TOO, BABY! SAY-WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT NIAGARA FALLS FOR THE HONEY-UM, HELLO?
GOTTA GO!
BUT AS SOON AS I STEP OUT OF THE DOOR, I WANDER INTO ART DIRECTOR ERIC WACHTMAN AND HIS RUMINATIONS ON THE WORLD OF DBZ! THESE GUYS ARE HARD-CORE!
...AND WITH THIS SIMPLE DIAGRAM, YOU CAN SEE HOW THE MOST POWERFUL BEING IN THE DRAGON BALL Z UNIVERSE IS BUBBLES THE MONKEY.
BUBBLES
IT ALL MAKES SENSE NOW!

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EVERYONE LOVES TOONAMI, AND THESE GUYS HAVE THE PROOF. PRODUCTION MANAGER BONNIE ROSMARIN SHOWS ME YEARS OF FAN ART.
THAT'LL BE TWO DOLLARS. TWO DOLLARS!
HEY! I THINK THAT SAILOR MINI-MOON DRAWING IS MINE! BOOYAKA!
DAMN IT, NONE OF THIS IS GETTING ME INTO DRAGON BALL Z. WHERE THE HELL AM I?
...SO COLD... SO... TINY...
SEE KIDS? THAT'S WHY FROZEN PEOPLE GET NO CHICKS! HEE HEE HEE!
SINCE I'M LOST, I MIGHT AS WELL REST AND PITCH AN IDEA TO SENIOR DESIGNER MATT CROUCH...
UH...NO. I DON'T THINK RENAMING TOONAMI TO "BIG WET MESS OF ANIME" IS A GOOD IDEA.
OKAY, HOW ABOUT "A TROPICAL MONSOON OF JAPANESE CARTOONS, WITH WINDS UP TO 65 MPH." EH? EH?
NOBODY'S WORKING AROUND HERE! IT'S ALL FUN AND GAMES...
DAMMIT! YOU ARE A WORTHY OPPONENT, CHAR AZNABLE, BUT I WILL DEFEAT YOU!
0-40. IF YOU MANAGE TO HIT IT OVER THE NET, LET ME KNOW---I'M GOING TO GET A SNAPPLE.
I STUMBLE INTO THE COMPOSITE EDITING ROOM, BUT PRODUCTION ASSISTANT JULIA MERRILL AND EDITOR JOHNNY REU SHOOT ME DOWN— THEY JUST DO POST-PRODUCTION WORK HERE.
JUMPIN' CATFISH!
SO...DO YOU KNOW WHERE I'D GO TO GET INTO AN EPISODE OF DBZ?
...FROM THE ORIGINAL. IT'S A LOT OF WORK.
SEE, SOMETIMES THE ORIGINAL TAPE HAS DETERIORATED. SO WITH THE HELP OF COMPUTERS AND DIGITAL ART PROGRAMS, WE CAN GET TENCHI! MUYO'S RYOKO...
UH...WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO LEAVE THIS ROOM.

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Physical Combat
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There is no Second Place!
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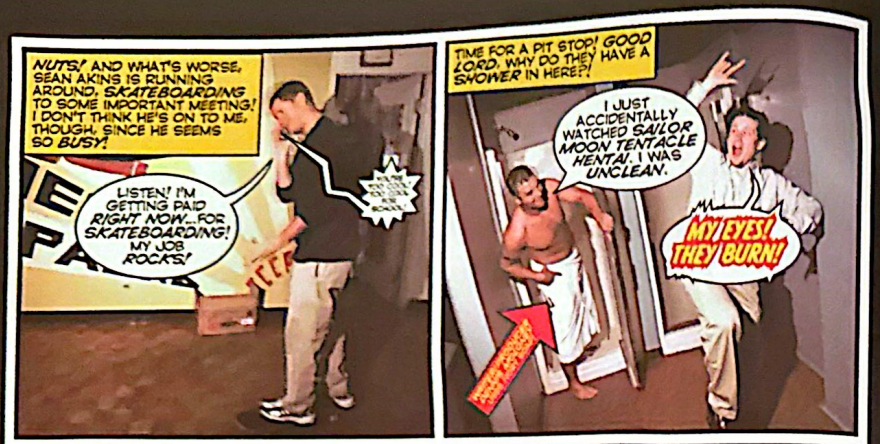
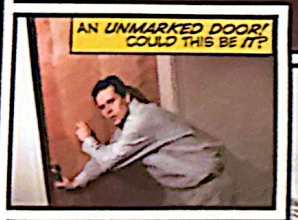

NUTS! AND WHAT'S WORSE, SEAN AKINS IS RUNNING AROUND, SKATEBOARDING TO SOME IMPORTANT MEETING! I DON'T THINK HE'S ON TO ME, THOUGH, SINCE HE SEEMS SO BUSY!
LISTEN! I'M GETTING PAID RIGHT NOW...FOR SKATEBOARDING! MY JOB ROCKS!

TIME FOR A PIT STOP! GOOD LORD, WHY DO THEY HAVE A SHOWER IN HERE?!
I JUST ACCIDENTALLY WATCHED SAILOR MOON TENTACLE HENTAI. I WAS UNCLEAN.
MY EYES! THEY BURN!

NEXT UP IS THE AUDIO ROOM. THIS IS WHERE ED BAIR OF BAIR TRACKS SOUND RECORDS THE SOUNDS FOR TOM AND THE CREW.
...THE HELL? WHERE IS THAT TERRIBLE FEEDBACK COMING FROM?
BZZZZZZ



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I'M RUNNING OUT OF PEOPLE TO SEE, AND I'M GETTING DESPERATE! ONLY ONE PERSON TO TURN TO--ASSOCIATE PRODUCER MEAGAN CLARK!
YOU GOTTA HELP ME FIND THE VIDEO ROOM! I HAVE AN EVIL PLAN--
I KILL YOU! I KILL YOU! YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD!
HELLO KITTY WANTS YOU TO TELL!
DOWN THE HALL, THREE DOORS ON THE RIGHT!
KITTY!
JACKPOT!
...CRAP.
NOT SO FAST, VILLAIN! I KNEW OF YOUR EVIL PLAN ALL ALONG, AND YOU WILL BE STOPPED!
YOU'LL NEVER STOP ME!
THROW DOWN!
HEEAAAAAARRRRRGGHH-
GAARRRGH!
NUHYEARGH!
BRRRRRRRRM!

"The action sequences are some of the most thoroughly a**-kicking action sequences I have EVER seen in anime, or anywhere else, for that matter."
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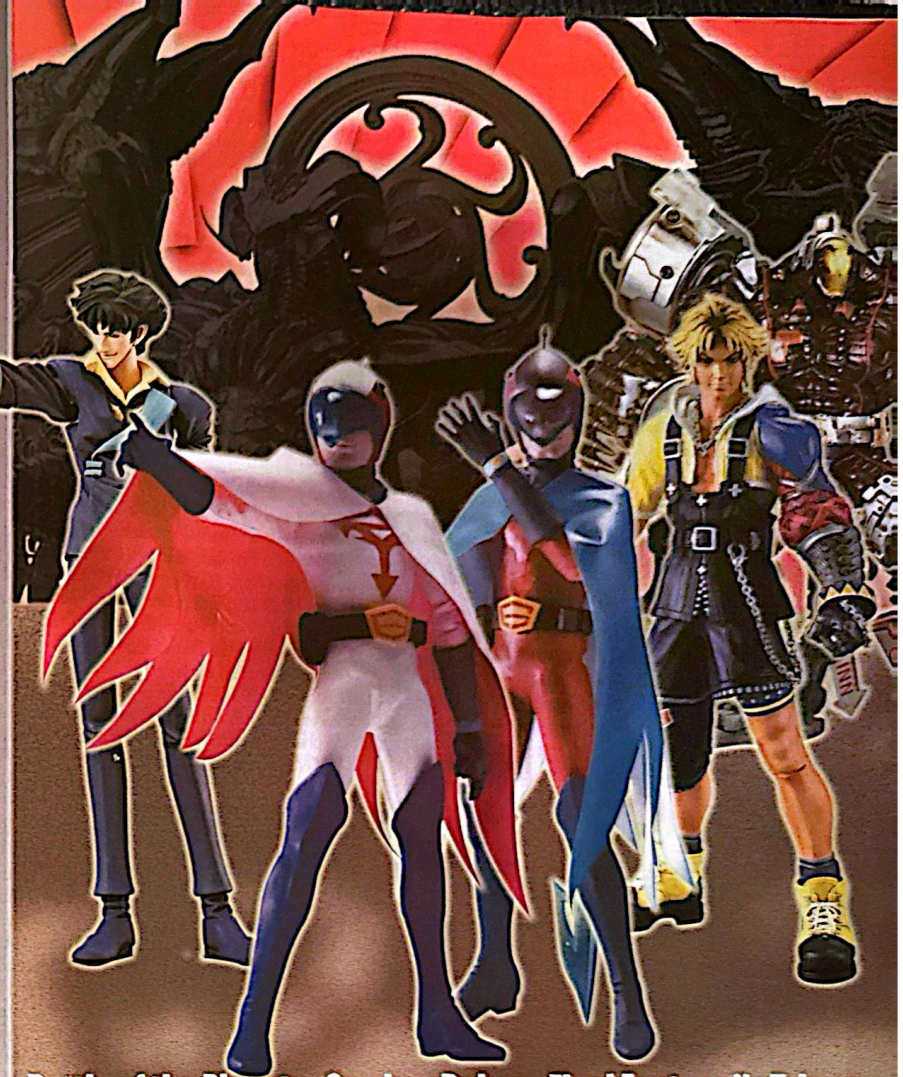
HA! YOU ARE BEATEN BECAUSE YOU DO NOT HAVE A PURE HEART, ROB BRICKEN.
I WILL GIVE YOU ONE CHANCE TO LEAVE TOONAMI AND NEVER SHOW YOUR FACE AGAIN! REPENT YOUR EVIL WAYS!
...NUHYEARGH?
MINUTES LATER...
HEE HEE!
SCANNING MY FACE MAKES MY EYES TINGLE!
LATER...
MMMM! ANOTHER DAY FINISHED!
TIME TO WATCH THE FRUITS OF OUR LOINS!
MAN, I DO LIKE BEVERAGES.
I THINK HE SAID THAT WRONG.
SHH! TOONAMI'S STARTING!
GASP!
HOLY!
BLACCH!
PSSSHT
NOT IN THE FACE!
I WANT HIM DEAD! DEAD! SEND OUT THE GUNDAM! THE BIG ONE!!
AT ROB'S THIRD FLOOR APARTMENT...
DID YOU SEE IT? HELL, YEAH! THOSE TOONAMI SUCKERS--THEY NEVER STOOD A CHANCE! ROB BRICKEN ROCKS THE--
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
...HOUSE?
--BZZT-- DESTRUCTION
ALL MISSI
ON TA
ND

JOIN THE INVASION!



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BIRTHDAY PRESENCE

ADV FILMS TURNS 10 YEARS OLD AND ANIME FANS GET THE GIFTS

It was hard being an *otaku* in 1992, but ADV Films was determined to help. Now, after 10 years, they've become the largest anime importer in America. To celebrate 10 years of helping fans get their fix, they're bringing out a mix of new and old.

ADV is releasing their classic titles on DVD—ones that first came out in the early '90s—in addition to their brand new shows. *Devil Hunter Yohko*, ADV's first release, is bursting back onto the scene on no-holds-barred special edition DVDs featuring remastered video and never-before-seen features. ADV is also re-releasing the hilariously naughty *Golden Boy* and *Galaxy Fraulein Yuna*.

BIRTHDAY GIRLS ADV celebrates the big 1-0 with lovelies like Excel (left) & Devil Hunters Akusa & Yohko (right).

While revisiting their past, ADV is still looking ahead. This summer sees the release of *Excel Saga*, one of the zaniest anime series ever. What little of *Excel Saga*'s story that can be explained consists of a mysterious organization known as ACROSS which wants to conquer the world, but is willing to concentrate on just one city. The leader plays video games while sending his top agent, Excel, on various tasks like killing her own manga creator. "It's milk-coming-out-of-your-nose, kick-your-dog-across-the-room funny," said Corey Henson from ADV's marketing and public relation department.

And that's not close to all. For their 10th anniversary bash, their upcoming catalog includes the new *Samurai X* (a.k.a. *Rurouni Kenshin*) series, the upcoming *Evangelion* Perfect Collection DVD set and, in a move sure to please the ladies, they've also grabbed the first two seasons of *Sailor Moon* and are prepping them for their first ever DVD release.

ADV knows that they owe it all to the fans. "We're doing a series of posters we're going to be giving away to fans at various cons over the summer," said Henson.

Not a bad birthday, huh? "As good as the first decade has been, the next is shaping up to be even better," said John Ledford, now the president and CEO of ADV Films. From the perspective of *otaku*, he's right. After all, they're getting all the presents. ■ Christian Nutt

FAST FORWARD

QUICK PEEKS AT THE NEXT BIG VIDEOS

DEATH AGAIN Manga Entertainment's release of the *Evangelion: Death & Rebirth* dual-sided DVD is now due June 25. Matt Perrier, its product manager, says, "The second side of the DVD is where we've done something really innovative... this will allow viewers to access a huge database of Eva-related information while watching the film." Saucy!

CURE FOR THE BLUES The entire 26 episode *Blue Seed* TV series is being packed into one convenient box by ADV Films. Four volumes originally comprised the DVD release of this show, each available for around $30. But reliable sources report that the new package will contain all four for [illegible]—a steal! No [illegible]

X DVD 4U Pioneer picked up the rights to the mega-popular *X* TV series, based on the original manga by supergroup CLAMP. Fans of last year's *X/1999* movie can enjoy 24 episodes later this fall.

GONZO THE GREAT

THE HOTTEST STUDIO IN JAPAN RULES THE SUMMER

REAL BOUT HIGH SCHOOL

Think you don't know who Gonzo is? Think again. This anime studio is tops with fans on both sides of the Pacific—and with so many hits coming out this summer, it's no surprise. Not one but four series are due from one of Japan's premier animation studios this year.

Vandread, a sci-fi epic where girls and guys really do live on different planets, and *Gatekeepers*, where strange invaders are destroying an alternate '60s Japan, have led the summer release pack from Pioneer and have been critically acclaimed for their exceptional animation and storytelling.

Now *Real Bout High School* brings together some of the most popular staples of anime and Gonzo's own touches to create one of the most exciting new series available, courtesy of TokyoPop. *RBHS* is set in a school where fighting isn't just encouraged—it's the official way to settle disputes. It stars Ryoko—a girl who follows the way of the samurai while looking bright-eyed and bubbly in her school uniform (of course).

Producer Ken Lee said, "I knew that their work was really good and I always wanted to work with them on something." On *RHBS* content, he mused, "It's kind of like a fighting game anime, but at the same time it rises above what you'd expect." This blend of action and character development is what sets it apart from its competitors. "I liken it to one of those fun big action movies—in a good way."

This July, Pioneer launches Gonzo's *Hellsing* as well. This action-packed anime stars a pair of vampire hunters who happen to be undead themselves. *Hellsing* is headed up by the valiant vampire Arucard, who uses silver bullets to send the undead into eternal slumber.

With all these hits, you've got to wonder when the folks at Gonzo ever rest—and when we'll get time to watch it all! Regardless, it'll be time to go Gonzo this summer. ■ CN

EASTERN EGGS

HIDDEN SECRETS OF YOUR FAVORITE DVDS

As anime DVDs grow in popularity, so do the hidden goodies tucked away on the new releases. Check out these mysterious bonuses:

BLUE GENDER VOL. 1
FuNimation gives fans credit—three of 'em? During the opening animation, hit the "Angle" button to switch between the English credits, the original Japanese credits and the creditless (or "clean") opening.

BLUE GENDER 1

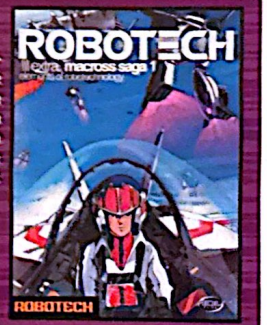
COWBOY BEBOP VOL. 6
Bebop yourself to the "Extras" menu and hit right five times. Hit right again to highlight the red eye on Ein's visor; hit "Enter" to see an Ein gallery.

HAND MAID MAY

HAND MAID MAY VOL. 1
Go to the Appendix menu. Highlight "Movie Appendix" and press up. Your cursor will move to the small video; press "Enter" to access a creditless version of the opening animation.

MACROSS
Disc 8: On the main menu, highlight episode 29, "Lonely Song" and then press left. After the cursor disappears, press "Enter" to view an animated selection of images from the show backed by an extended remix of the opening theme.
Disc 9: Go to the settings menu. Move your cursor to the "Main Menu" button and hit down, and "Enter." You'll be treated to a hidden slideshow of 52 character and mechanical designs for the series.

ROBOTECH LEGACY VOL. 1
While watching "Codename: Robotech," the special that comes on the disk, there's a bonus audio track: hit "Audio" to get to track three where you can hear a music and effects only soundtrack. ■ CN



ROBOTECH

ON THE SHELF

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR ANIME STORES THIS SUMMER?

JUNE RELEASES

BETTERMAN: THE AWAKENING VOL. 1

Young Keita stumbles into an amusement park where a series of mysterious deaths has occurred and encounters a girl who appears in his dreams and a mysterious robot they can pilot together. (Bandai, DVD, $29.98)

BLUE SEED: PERFECT COLLECTION

When a mysterious plantlike infestation of demons hits Tokyo, TAC must battle these horrible creatures to save a young girl named Momiji whose power can destroy them. (ADV Films, DVD, $59.98)

CITY HUNTER: SECRET SERVICE

The latest adventure of private detective Ryo and his sidekick Kaori concerns a young Japanese member of the Secret Service named Anna Shinjo. Political intrigue and action abound as a conspiracy unfolds. (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)

WHO YA GONNA CALL? It can't be denied that Ghost Sweeper Mikami is cuter than Dan Akroyd.

DRAGON BALL 22 & 23

As the evil Red Ribbon army closes in, the Dragon Balls are almost collected. Who will get to summon the dragon? And when will Goku get to eat? (FUNimation, VHS, $19.95)

DRAGON BALL Z 70 & 71

Gohan's dead, Vegeta's dead and Goku's still dead, but hope is not lost when Goten and Trunks fuse to become Gotenks! But can he stop Majin Boo? (FUNimation, DVD, $24.95)

EXCEL SAGA VOL. 1

The main character, Excel, dies eight times in the first episode. She's soon resurrected and inducted into the mysterious ACROSS, an organization bent on taking over the city of F. (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)

GHOST SWEEPER MIKAMI: THE MOVIE

Reiko Mikami has a sensitivity to ghosts and spirits. She puts this to good use by charging cold, hard cash for her services. But has she met her match this time around? (Manga Entertainment, DVD, $24.98, VHS $19.98)

GUNDRESS

Humanoid suits of armor known as Gundress are the only way to stop crime in this movie with character designs by the ever-popular Masamune Shirow of *Ghost in the Shell* fame. Cute girls make the best pilots. (Manga Entertainment, DVD, $29.95, VHS $19.98)

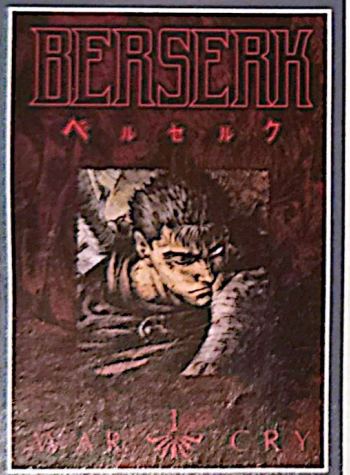
LOVE HINA: SECRET LIVED

The misadventur[illegible]ro continue as he and Naru[illegible]nce again for the entra[illegible]n for Tokyo University. [illegible]$29.98)

HOT PICK

BERSERK: WAR CRY VOL. 1

May 28 on DVD, $29.95
Media Blasters



The acclaimed fantasy anime finally makes its DVD debut in the U.S. after a couple of years on the fan circuit. Those of you who enjoyed Sega's Dreamcast might be familiar with this series from the game *Sword of the Berserk*, which Eidos released in late 1999. The story follows the swordsman Gatts and his travels throughout a medieval land infested with demons and brigands. The first disc hints at Gatts' relationship with the malevolent creatures that stalk the night; we learn that he's somehow bound to the darkness. Its gore is matched in its psychological terror. As the viewer learns the secrets behind the pasts of the characters, the tale builds to an astonishing climax. The first disc is available with a cardboard box designed to house the entire series, a Japanese practice that's beginning to filter into the U.S. According to rumors, the Sci-Fi channel was interested in broadcasting Berserk but the show was deemed [illegible] for TV—now you can watch it anyway!

Ranma 1/2
FROM the DEPTHS of DESPAIR
RANMA FOREVER
Volume 2
Rumiko Takahashi's
Ranma 1/2
FROM the DEPTHS of DESPAIR
RANMA FOREVER
Ryoga Laying a Beatdown on Ranma?
Wake Me Up When It's Over – With a Ranma Watch!
SUGGESTED 13 UP
3 New Episodes Per Volume!
DVD VIDEO
Pioneer
COMING THIS AUGUST FROM VIZ VIDEO
©2002 Rumiko [illegible]/Shogakukan-Kitty Films-Fuji TV
VIZ

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: LAHLA'S FATE VOL. 10

The final volume of the classic saga brings the story of Amuro Ray and Char Aznable to a thrilling close. Their rivalry—and the tragedy it causes—will change the Gundam universe. (Bandai, DVD, $24.98, VHS $14.98)

PATLABOR TV VOL. 2

The second volume of this classic series about mecha-piloting cops in a near-future Tokyo. Follow Noa Izumi as she pilots Alphonse against an array of criminals, miscreants and terrorists! (Central Park Media, DVD, $29.98)

PSYCHIC WARS

A brilliant surgeon named Ukyo Retsu discovers that demons are planning to attack the Earth, and his newfound psychic powers are the only chance to defeat the forces of evil. (Manga Entertainment, DVD, $24.95)

RANMA FOREVER VOL. 1

The first volume of the last season of the beloved TV series contains the gender-bending pal martial artist Ranma Saotome and his love/hate relationship with tomboyish Akane. (Viz Video, DVD, $24.98)

RED HAWK

A supremely powerful warrior known only as Red Hawk must defeat an ultimate evil crime syndicate known as Camelia Blossoms with only the power of his fists. (Manga Entertainment, DVD, $24.95)

RUROUNI KENSHIN: FALL FROM GRACE VOL. 19

The continuing saga of the mysterious swordsman with red hair and the cross-shaped scar continues, as Kenshin must intervene in the disputes between the two factions, though temporarily blinded. (Media Blasters, DVD, $29.95, VHS $24.95)

BIRD MAN! In times of trouble, Red Hawk beats up enough people that everything turns out okay.

RONIN WARRIORS: WARRIORS REUNITED VOL. 2

The five young masters of the legendary samurai armor must repel the attacks of Talpa and his Warlord forces. Contains the original Japanese and the English TV version. (Bandai, DVD, $24.98)

SAILOR MOON VOL. 3 & 4

These two volumes of the classic original series debut on the same day. Relive your favorite moments of the first season, as Sailor Moon and the other four Scouts battle the evil plots of Queen Beryl and the other denizens of the Negaverse. (ADV Films, DVD, $14.98)

SAILOR MOON SUPER S: PEGASUS COLLECTION 3

Rini and Pegasus must continue to work against the evil machinations of the Amazon Trio as Sailor Moon and the other Sailor Scouts follow their lead. (Pioneer Entertainment, DVD, $29.99)

SILENT MOBIUS VOL. #1

Mysterious invaders have begun attacking humans in 2052 Tokyo. A division of the metropolitan police lead by psychic Katsumi Reiho defeat these terrible beings before they bring humanity to [illegible]. (Bandai, DVD, $44.98)

HOT PICK

ESCAFLOWNE THE MOVIE: ULTIMATE EDITION

July 23 on DVD, $54.98
Bandai Entertainment

There's a lot of *Escaflowne* coming out this month, but 'Flowne fans absolutely cannot miss this special edition of the fresh-from theaters movie. Filled with lavish animation and a score by the renowned musician Yoko Kanno (*Cowboy Bebop*), it tells a very different story from the TV series. Hitomi is a depressed girl who is transported to the fantasy world of Gaia and forced to help the young prince Van strive to defeat the mysterious Folken—and to do it, they'll need the legendary armor called Escaflowne, which only Hitomi can find. The problem is that when it's found, it is prophesied to destroy Gaia as well. The Ultimate Edition includes a Production Art Gallery, Theatrical Poster Gallery, Staff, Cast and Escaflowne Premiere Event Interviews, Interviews, a musical performance by Masaya Sakamoto and footage from the Anime Expo premiere! Better still, it includes a soundtrack CD of Yoko Kanno's wonderful score. Bandai is releasing a regular edition with the movie only for $29.98, but we say it's worth saving for, especially if you didn't get to see it in theaters. The Ultimate Edition is limited, so be on the look-out!

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Ages 16UP
$24.99 (a $50.98 Value!)

Swords and sorcery! Includes the programs *Legend of Lemnear* and *Garzey's Wing*
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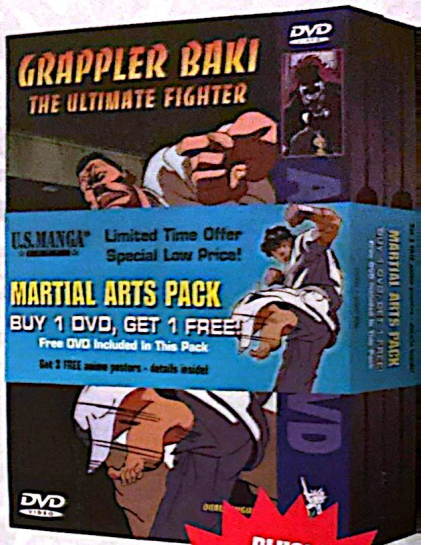
$24.99 (a $55.98 Value!)

Chicks rule! Includes the programs *Virgin Fleet* and *Gall Force*
Ages 13UP
$24.99 (a $60.98 Value!)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SLAYERS COLLECTION
The diminutive sorceress Lina Inverse and her brainless sidekick Gourry travel the land in search of adventure. This reissue of the original box restores missing footage and corrects audio errors. (Central Park Media, DVD, $129.99)

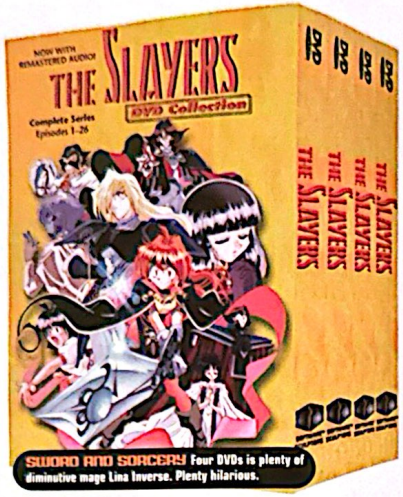
SOUL TAKER: BLOOD BETRAYAL VOL. 3
Kyosuke Date—a.k.a. the Soul Taker—delves deeper into the secrets behind the disappearances of the strange clone fragments known only as Flickers. But will he be able to save his sister? (Pioneer Entertainment, DVD, $29.99)

TOKYO REVELATION
A high school student named Kojiro Soma discovers that he's the embodiment of a powerful force for good just as a young, confused and murderous boy begins attacking the people of Tokyo. (Manga Entertainment, DVD, $24.95)

JULY RELEASES

COSMO WARRIOR ZERO VOL. 1
The latest anime based on the work of Leiji Matsumoto (of Star Blazers fame) is a tale of battle-hardened Admiral Zero, who must hunt down the legendary pirate Captain Harlock. (Media Blasters, DVD, $29.95)

DEVIL HUNTER YOHKO COLLECTION 2
The second disc wraps up the exploits of everyone's favorite Devil Hunter as she discovers the secrets behind the evil uprising and teams up with devil hunters from throughout history to destroy the ultimate evil. Music videos, too! (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)



DRAGON BALL Z 72 &73
Twice the DBZ madness! While Gohan trains with the Old Kai to tap his latent powers, Gotenks and Piccolo try to hold off Boo? Will Gohan return in time? (FUNimation, DVD, $24.95)

ESCAFLOWNE LIMITED EDITION TV BOX SET
Hitomi Kanzaki is a normal girl with a crush on her track team's captain until she's whisked into a magical world known as Gaia where only she can help defeat the evil Zaibach Empire. (Bandai, DVD, $199.98)

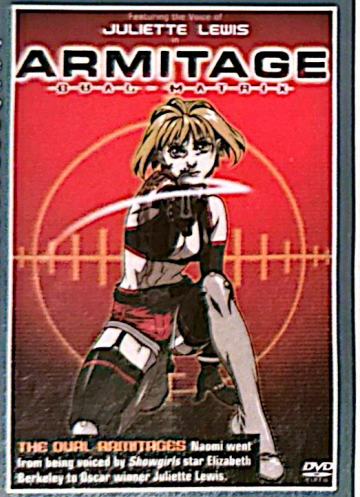
EX-DRIVER VOL. 1
Lorna Endou and Lisa Sakakino are the best drivers in the world, and they alone have the authority to chase down the mysterious AI-controlled cars that have gone haywire. (Media Blasters, DVD, $24.95)

FANCY LALA VOL. 1
Miho Shinohara is a normal nine-year-old until she finds a magical pen which allows her to transform into the singing sensation Fancy Lala. Can Miho juggle her dreams of being an artist with the demands of a sing[illegible]? (Bandai, DVD, $24.98)

GETTER RO[illegible] ARMAGED[illegible] PACK
This 13-episod[illegible] lows the

HOT PICK

ARMITAGE DUAL MATRIX: SPECIAL EDITION
June 25 on DVD, $69.98
Pioneer


Featuring the Voice of
JULIETTE LEWIS
in
ARMITAGE
DUAL-MATRIX
THE DUAL ARMITAGES Naomi went from being voiced by Showgirls star Elizabeth Berkeley to Oscar winner Juliette Lewis.
DVD

Renegade cop Naomi Armitage and her partner Boss Syllibus have taken care of problems stemming from the situations in the previous *Armitage* film—*Polymatrix*—and settled down on Mars to raise their daughter Yoko in peace. That is, until the forces that threatened to destroy them, the powerful "Third" robots, rise up on Earth. Naomi is forced to start a hands-on investigation into the situation. She embarks on a journey to Earth, where she discovers that robot clones of herself are being developed in the factories on the human race's home planet. Of the four *Armitage* DVDs coming out this day, this is the one to get if you've got the dough! The Lunchbox Edition has the Special Edition, an exclusive variant Armitage figure from McFarlane Toys and a special lunchbox! Or you can just get the *Armitage Dual Matrix* Special Edition DVD, which has a making-of featurette, music-only soundtrack, character gallery trailers and a printed booklet that examines the world of Armitage for $29.98; or a *Dual Matrix/Polymatrix* 2-pack for $39.98. Or you can get the bare-bones feature-only edition for $19.98. Didn't catch your drift yet?

GLOBAL INFILTRATION MANGA
COMING FALL 2002
RAIJINCOMICS.COM

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adventures of Musashi, Hayato and Ryoma, the pilots of the Getter Robots, must try and prevent the destruction of the world using their advanced equipment. (ADV Films, DVD, $59.98)

HELLSING VOL. 1

In a deadly world where vampires roam the night, the mysterious rogue vampire Arucard and the Hellsing Organization protects humans from becoming their prey. (Pioneer Entertainment, DVD, $29.98)

MARMALADE BOY VOL 1

The classic romance anime finally comes to the US! High-schooler Miki is shocked when her parents come home from vacation and tell her they've swapped partners with another couple—and astonished to meet Yuu, their son. But soon she finds herself falling for him. (TokyoPop, DVD, $29.98)

NEON GENESIS EVANGELION: DEATH & REBIRTH

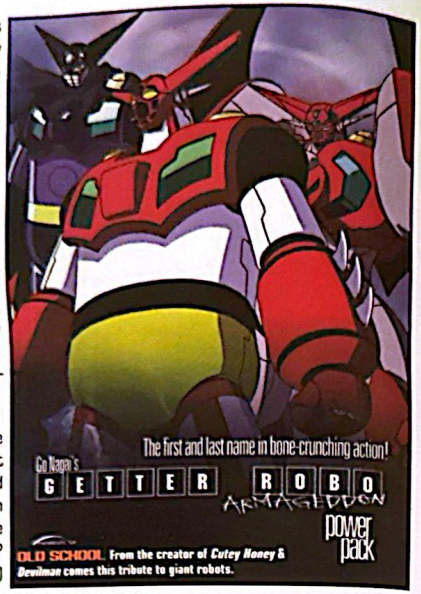
Finally here, *Death* is a feature film that retells the entire series' story via clips, while *Rebirth* is the first third of the final movie, *End of Evangelion*. Copious bonus materials make the DVD a must-buy for fans. (Manga Entertainment, DVD $29.95, VHS $19.95)

VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU VOL. 6

Stranded in the twilight between human and demon, Miyu has the power to offer humans the gift of eternal happiness,yet is doomed to perpetual solitude. (TokyoPop, DVD, $29.99)

YU YU HAKUSHO VOL. 3 & 4

Yusuke must learn to handle his new powers as a Spirit Detective to keep our world from being over-run with monsters! But can he even handle high school? (FUNimation, DVD, $29.98)


The first and last name in bone-crunching action!
Go Nagai's
GETTER ROBO
ARMAGEDDON
power pack
OLD SCHOOL From the creator of Cutey Honey & Devilman comes this tribute to giant robots.

AUGUST RELEASES

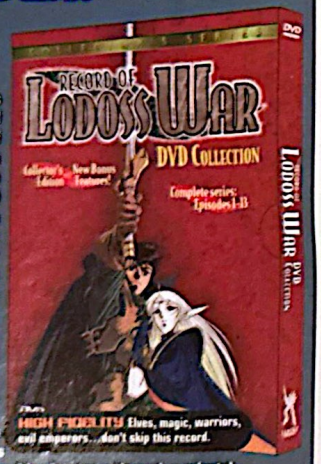
HOT PICK

RECORD OF LODOSS WAR COLLECTOR'S SERIES

July 9 on DVD, $59.99
Central Park Media

This fantasy series has captured countless fans in Japan and America for its beautiful animation and incredible design. One of the original epic fantasies of anime, Lodoss War tells the tale of a war-torn island in a medieval milieu, with dwarves, elves and magic aplenty, centered around a young warrior named Parn and his Elven paramour Deedlit as they try to save their world from the evil wizards and god who threaten it. Meanwhile, dragons, dark magic and noble knights delight anime fans or Dungeons & Dragons aficionados.

Back in the early days of DVD, the original six-episode *Lodoss War* series was released in a no-frills two disc edition. Now Central Park Media is re-releasing this classic in a new enhanced set with completely re-mastered video and bonus materials never before seen in the U.S. The video has gone through a painstaking cleaning process to make sure that it looks better than it ever, and the original opening, ending and episode previews have been reinstated in the episodes to present them as they were originally created—this is the ultimate version of the *Record of Lodoss War*.


RECORD OF LODOSS WAR
DVD COLLECTION
Lodoss War DVD Collection
HIGH FIDELITY! Elves, magic, warriors, evil emperors...don't skip this record.

ADVENTURES OF THE MINI-GODDESSES VOL. 4

This time, it's the Skuld files, but fans of the SD-goddesses know the focus is always on wacky adventures and tormenting their rat buddy, Gan. (Bandai, DVD, $29.98)

BURN UP EXCESS, VOL. 1

Rio and Team Warrior are back in this sequel to Burn Up W. As always, Rio and her cohorts must foil the plans of terrorist organizations and do so with aplomb, causing havoc and mayhem to reign. (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)

DRAGON BALL Z: RETURN OF COOLER

Another DBZ movie hits the shelves, as Frieza's brother Cooler comes back to extract revenge on the Z warriors! Does Cooler even stand a chance? (FUNimation, DVD, $29.98, VHS, $14.98)

STRAWBERRY [illegible]: MAKE-UP EM[illegible] VOL. 1

Hibiki Amawa is [illegible]rmined to get a job, but the l[illegible]gh school only employs femal[illegible]s. Undaunted, Hibiki applies [illegible]ack... (Pioneer Entertainmen[illegible]29.98)

WE INTERRUPT THIS MAGAZINE FOR EXCITING HAPPY NEWS!

EXCEL SAGA IS NOW ON DVD!
with TONS of freakin' EXTRAS!

WHAT'S IT ABOUT YOU ASK?
Wacky show with cute girl heroine
incompetent loser bad guys
good guy afro-wearing bad-a** muthas
super-mysterious overlord types
psycho twisted comic book creator man
and delicious funny singing dog!

★★★★★
I give it FIVE stars!
- THE PIG

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1992-2002 ADV FILMS

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WHAT UP, G?!

G-GUNDAM COMING TO A TV NEAR YOU

Looking for a little international variety in your giant mecha combat? Well, get your passports ready for the North American debut of *Mobile Fighter G-Gundam*, coming to Cartoon Network this summer.

Commonly known as *G-Gundam* and released in 1994 in Japan as part of the Gundam 15th Anniversary, it was the first of the alternate-universe Gundam TV series. In other words, it has nothing to do with the tight Universal Century (with Amuro Ray and Char Aznable and such) continuity—just like *Gundam Wing*. The nations of Earth have fled terra firma to live in giant space colonies. Instead of having wars or elections to decide who runs the solar system, the colonies build ethnically based Gundams to represent them in a formal combat held every year on Earth.

The main character is Domon Kasshu, a brooding Japanese martial artist (he can catch bullets with his teeth!) who fights for Neo-Japan with his Shining Gundam. His main rival is the flashy, street-wise American Chibodee Crocket, piloting Gundam Maxter, which occasionally puts on boxing gloves.

G-Gundam is infamous for the Gundams which each country uses to fight in the annual battle. For instance, while Japan has the basic Shining Gundam, Egypt has Pharaoh Gundam. Spain, Matador Gundam. China, Dragon Gundam. With a twisted sense of humor there's France's Gundam Rose, who looks like Napoleon. The axe-wielding Lumber Gundam represents Canada. Greece has got the sandal-wearing (?) Zeus Gundam. Kenya's Zebra Gundam looks like a Zulu warrior with stripes. And let's not forget everyone's favorite, Tequila Gundam of Mexico—who sports a snazzy sombrero and cactus armor!

While *G-Gundam* may have its tongue planted firmly in cheek, the series won't disappoint regular Gundam fans. "Gundam fans can expect to see both an intricate and dramatic storyline that many have associated with the Gundam series," says Jerry Chu, Marketing Director at Bandai Entertainment. "What you will find in *G-Gundam* is plenty of action-packed mecha battles between a lot of new Gundams.

"Imagine the Olympics meets *Street Fighter* meets Gundam," says Chu. Between the action, humor and craziness, *G-Gundam* may be a combo too tough to beat this summer. ■ Karl Cramer

GIVE 'EM A HAND Neo-Japan's Shining Gundam lays the smack down with his burning hand. No, really.

TUNE IN TOKYO

BE A FAN OF A SHOW ONLY ON THE AIR IN JAPAN

RAHXEPHON

From the production companies behind *Cowboy Bebop* and *Vision of Escaflowne* comes this new series, which has earned many fans for it's *Evangelion*-esque quality. Ayato Kamina believes the entire world has been destroyed except for Tokyo, which is protected by an energy shield. However, outside Tokyo, a war is being fought between modern humanity and an ancient civilization known as Mu, who are blue-blooded humans—literally. The Mu are trying to capture a set of ruins, and Ayato Kamina has been chosen to protect them by piloting the Rahxephon.

Besides the slick animation and computer graphics a la *Cowboy Bebop*, *Rahxephon* has a heavily complicated but intriguing plot, with great twists. For instance, in the shielded Tokyo, time runs slower, so Kamina believes it's 2015, when in fact it's 2027! Add in music by the inestimable Yoko Kanno (*Macross Plus*, *Cowboy Bebop*), *Rahxephon* clearly just...rocks. ■ RB

RAHXEPHON

MUSCLE MASSING

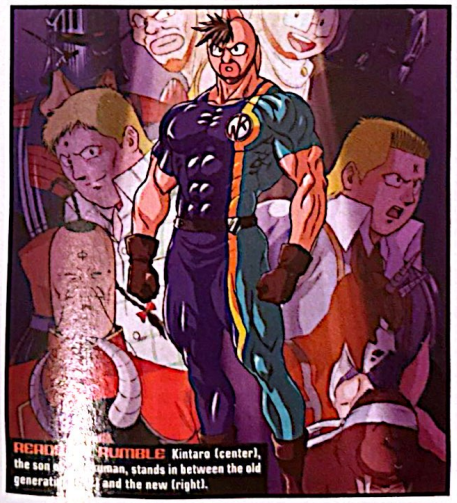
KINNIKUMAN ENTERS THE SATURDAY MORNING RING

This fall, 4Kids Entertainment—the savvy cartoon producers behind the mega-successes of *Pokémon*, *Digimon* and *Yu-Gi-Oh*—have chosen the next craze: *Kinnikuman*. This cartoon, set to premiere on Fox Kids this fall, is a mix of super-heroes, bizarre villains, crazy comedy and, most importantly, professional wrestling.

Sound familiar? That's because Kinnikuman first made it to America in the form of those little pink toys under the name M.U.S.C.L.E. in 1985. Those were based off the original manga and anime show, which premiered in Japan in 1983; the show's ridiculous characters, raunchy humor and over-the-top wrestling action made it a hit, although only the tiny collectible figures made their way to America.

In 1999, the *Kinnikuman: Second Generations* manga premiered from the same creative team. In it, the original superhero/alien/wrestler Kinnikuman is old and fat, and his son Kintaro is just as sniveling a coward as his papa. Kintaro gets sent to Earth to help defend it, and generally just cries and wets himself until something serious happens. This usually involves evil alien wrestlers attacking his friends or trying to conquer the planet, at which point he takes care of business. Starring the children of the original series' warriors, *Kinnikuman: Second Generations* has all the action and hilarity of the original, as well as a sense of history.

4Kids knows anime blockbusters, and they're sure *Kinnikuman* will be another hit. "It's got everything," says Josh Izzo, assistant marketing manager for 4Kids and huge *Kinnikuman* fan. "It's got super heroes. Action. Adventure. Comedy. Wrestling. It's naturally appealing to kids and it's got that nostalgia factor for kids of the '80s." Are you ready to step into the ring? ■ Rob Bricken



READY TO RUMBLE Kintaro (center), the son [illegible]man, stands in between the old generati[illegible] and the new (right).

ON THE AIR

UPDATING AND INFORMING YOU ON BOOB-TUBE GOINGS-ON

ACTION CHANNEL

It's always worth checking out what's on the Action Channel each night (starsoperpak.com/se/action/index.html)—anime like *New Dominion Tank Police*, *Bubblegum Crisis*, *Patlabor*, *Macross Plus* and *Sol Bianca* are network staples. Even *Appleseed* and *Princess Mononoke* are on the schedule!

MACROSS PLUS

CARTOON NETWORK

SAILOR MOON

Our prayers have been answered! Starting on June 3rd, not only is Toonami getting another hour, but *Sailor Moon* will finally return to TV! Watch her and the Sailor Scouts Monday-Friday at 3:30 p.m. Also check *Hamtaro* (see story on next page), mornings at 7 a.m. On Saturdays, catch 2 hours of *DBZ* at 11 a.m., and at 1 p.m. it's *DB*, with *Zoids* at 2:30 p.m.

Toonami: Another dose of *Hamtaro* starts at 4 p.m., followed by *Zoids*. Then at 6 p.m., it's *Dragon Ball* and then *Dragon Ball Z*.

Midnight Run: *DBZ* and *DB*, starting at midnight, of course.

Adult Swim: Saturday night's alright for anime! Beginning at 11 p.m., it's *Yu Yu Hakusho*, *Cowboy Bebop*, *Gundam 0083*, *M.S. Gundam*, *Outlaw Star* and *Pilot Candidate*.

FOX KIDS

TRANSFORMERS

Fox Kids is now nothin' but Saturdays, baby. But the good news is lots of these episodes are brand-new!

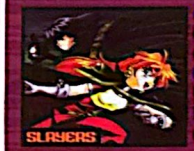
Digimon: Digital Monsters: 9 a.m., with new episodes at 10 a.m.!

Medabots: 9:30 a.m.

Transformers: Robots in Disguise: 10:30 a.m.

Mon Colle Knights: Welcome to Mon World, filled with monsters and magic! And, of course, kids who have to collect stuff. It's at 11 a.m.!

INTERNATIONAL CHANNEL



SLAYERS

Uncut anime, in Japanese! You might even learn a thing or two!

Dragon Ball Z: Saturdays at 4 a.m. and Sundays at 10:30 p.m.

Slayers: Saturdays at 4:30 a.m. and Sundays at 11 p.m.

KIDS' WB!

POKÉMON

Pokémon: Weekdays at 4 p.m., repeats from the first three seasons air.

Pokémon: Johto League Champions: Saturdays at 10 a.m. It's all new episodes from the fourth season of the world's most recognized anime.

Yu-Gi-Oh!: Starting April 1, *Yu-Gi-Oh!* went to a whopping six episodes a week! It's on weekdays at 3:30 p.m. (replacing *Cardcaptors*) and Saturdays at 11 a.m.

SHOWTIME BEYOND

You'll have to search www.sho.com to weed it out on the schedule, but uncut episodes of *Fist of the North Star* and the series *Shadow Skill* run regularly on this cable network. ■ Tom Root

Scanned with CamScanner

CALLING COLLECT

GOTTA CATCH SOMETHING!

Collecting anime...it's hot!

Wait, maybe you misunderstood. We meant "anime in which stuff gets collected," not the act of collecting anime. From *Pokémon* to *Cardcaptors*, nothing's hotter than...yep... collecting-style anime. In fact, it's so hot, other anime series considered hopping on the bandwagon once...

COWBOY BEBOP

Since the BeBop crew was so bad at catching bounties, producers considered centering the show around catching walking, talking cigarettes! Each cigarette character was distinguished by a different flavor, blend and filter! At the end of the series, the character who'd caught the most cigarettes would win lung cancer.

SAILOR MOON

The revamped show where characters "catch" things didn't turn out so well. Serena caught a cold, Raye caught on fire, Mina caught the clap and Darien caught a statutory rape charge.

TENCHI MUYO!

Half the cast was enlisted to catch cats, the other half enlisted to catch rabbits. At the end of each episode, they'd put the animals in a giant grinder to make "cabbits" just like cute li'l Ryo-oki! Wait, did I say "cabbits"? I meant "cabbit burgers." This idea was quickly abandoned.

DRAGON BALL Z

The concept of DBZ was going to be tweaked just a bit; they'd still have to collect Dragon Balls, but now there'd be more than 400 of them! That would push the total episode count somewhere around 5,500. When the animators threatened to mutiny, the idea was dropped. ■ TB

CEDAR CHIPS AHOY!

HYPER-CUTE HAMSTERS INVADE CARTOON NETWORK

What do hamsters do when their owners are away? Get shows put on Cartoon Network, apparently. News is Cartoon Network grabbed the rights to 54 episodes of *Hamtaro*, the tale of an ever-so-cute hamster and his pals.

Tottoko Hamutaro, as it is known in Japan, is insanely popular—based on a popular children's book series by Ritsuko Kawai, it's the highest rated children's show since its debut in 2000.

When ten-year-old Laura and her hamster Hamtaro move into a new neighborhood, they both need to make new friends—enter the Ham-Ham Gang: Howdy, Pashima and Boss. Like real-life hamsters, they're hyper-curious and get into bizarre hamster-scale adventures.

Look for it on the Cartoon Network morning schedule starting in July. Soon after, expect a run on hamsters at pet stores. ■ KC

KAWAII CRITTER Even Pikachu is scared of the cuteness of Hamtaro.

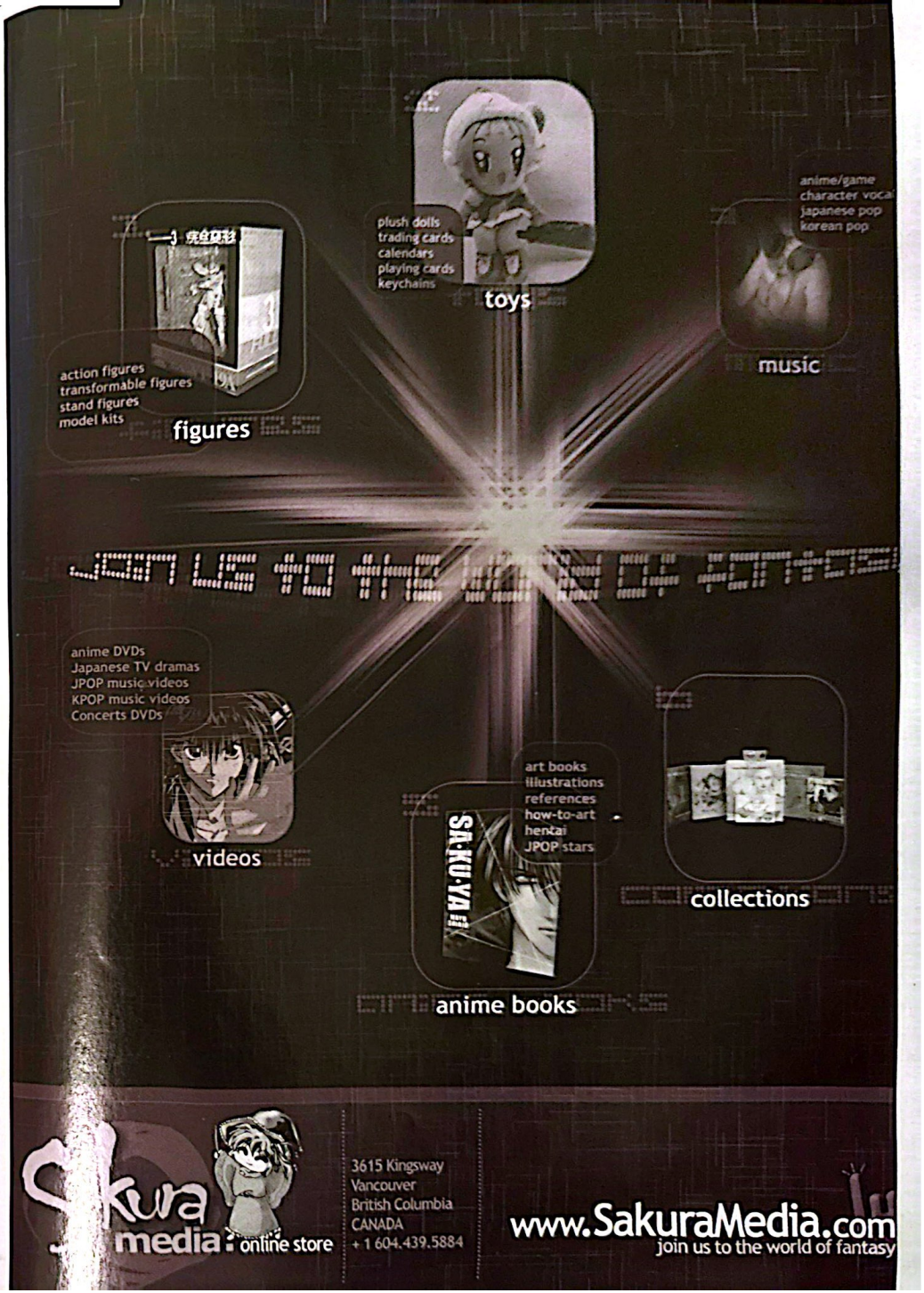
TENCHI MUCHO

JAPAN NEEDS TWO TENCHI SPIN-OFFS

POLICE STORY Seina Yamada joins the Galaxy Police and male fantasy.

In love with Tenchi, like all the ladies seem to be? Then there's good news—starting this spring, a new *Tenchi* TV series will debut in Japan. Called *Tenchi Muyo GXP*, it's actually a side story in which a young man named Seina Yamada gets accepted into the Galaxy Police when the GP think he's related to the powerful Tenchi Masaki family. No regular *Tenchi* member will be in the show, but most characters are rumored to make cameos.

Better news is that a new regular storyline *Tenchi Muyo* OVA is due out this year, featuring an upcoming battle between feisty scientist Washu, goddess Tsunami and the mysterious Lady Tokimi. And series creator Masaki Kajishima has sworn that Tenchi will finally pick one of his love interests. Could he possibly survive that? Given the success of *Tenchi* on Toonami, it's likely we'll know pretty soon! ■ RB

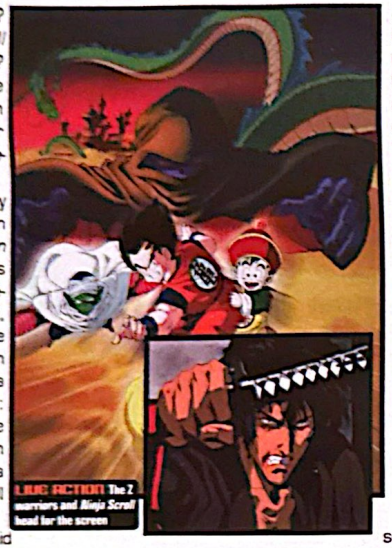


LIVE FROM JAPAN

ANIME PROPERTIES HEAD FOR THE BIG SCREEN—WITH REAL PEOPLE!

A new *Dragon Ball* movie? A new *Ninja Scroll* movie? Can it be true? Yes—kinda. News has just come to light of films in production based on both of the popular anime series, but...they're live-action entries.

On March 12, 20th Century Fox announced its acquisition of feature film rights to *Dragon Ball* for its Fox 2000 Pictures division to develop into a live-action franchise. FUNimation, the American producer of the *Dragon Ball* anime, clarified on March 20 that it will be a *Dragon Ball Z* movie, stating: "FOX plans to place this movie on a fast-track production schedule, and may have a movie released as early as fall 2003 or summer 2004."



LIVE ACTION The 2 warriors and *Ninja Scroll* head for the screen

Fox's publicity department said that they will respect the *Dragon Ball Z* world established by creator Akira Toriyama, even though Toriyama is not expected to be involved with the film. (Toriyama was similarly not involved in the first attempt at a live-action *Dragon Ball* movie, the 1989 martial arts travesty *Dragonball: The Magic Begins*.)

On March 13, Threshold Entertainment (producers of the *Mortal Kombat* film franchise) announced its acquisition of live-action rights to the 1993 anime *Ninja Scroll* from the film's producer, Madhouse animation studio. "[Threshold] is currently developing the $60 million, effects-laden, live-action samurai feature film," a press release stated. Threshold plans to produce *Ninja Scroll* in "all media, including television, live stage tours, video games, music and more."

Digital Manga, a Los Angeles company that specializes in licensing and importing anime, acted as the liaison between Threshold Entertainment and Madhouse regarding Ninja Scroll. "Digital Manga's president, Hikaru Sasahara, is going to be a co-producer of the *Ninja Scroll* live-action theatrical feature, and will be fully involved in its production," said representative Tim Law. "Other than that, Threshold's acquisition of the franchise is too recent for any realistic schedules to be discussed."

As if that wasn't enough, Warner Brothers has acquired the rights to a live-action *Akira* movie, to be directed by *Blade*'s Stephen Norrington. Norrington was reported as saying the film would preserve the tone of the original post-apocalyptic epic, while making it "more accessible" to Western audiences. No release date has been set. ■ Fred Pattern

TRAILERS

TINY BITS OF UPCOMING FLICKS

CAT PEOPLE

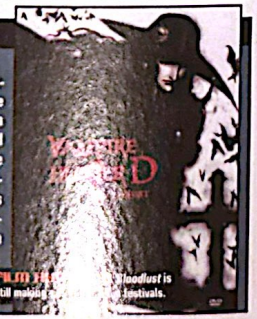
Hayao Miyazaki's Studio Ghibli recently announced their next film, *The Cats' Repayment of Kindness* (*Neko no Ongaeshi*, a companion film to 1995's *Whispers of the Heart*. Both are based on manga by Aoi Hiiragi. Although Miyazaki will not direct, it is rumored that he will direct another film to be released in 2004.

FUTURE PERFECT

The director of *Perfect Blue*, Satoshi Kon, has confirmed that DreamWorks SKG has acquired the distribution rights outside of Asia to his next animated film, a fictional biography called *Millennium Actress*. The film has been completed for over a year and was shown last summer in Canada, but is being distributed in Japan for the first time this summer.

LUST FOR LIFE

If you missed Urban Vision's *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust* on the big screen, you may still have a chance to catch it. UV's scheduled theatrical release ended in late April, but film festivals and colleges continue to request it. It's currently scheduled for the Cinemuerte International Horror Film Festival, July 6-7 in Vancouver, B.C., and at the Oak Cinema, August 9-10 in Baton Rouge, La.



FILM FEST *Bloodlust* is still making the festivals.

SPIRITED AWAY AT LAST

MIYAZAKI'S MASTERPIECE HITS U.S. THIS SUMMER

Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* (*Sen to Chihiro no Kamakushi*), the biggest movie blockbuster in Japan's history, has finally been confirmed for a North American release by Disney, following a reputed bidding war between Disney and DreamWorks.

B.O. K.O. *Spirited* knocked out the Japanese box office, and is on its way to the U.S.

"Learning from Miramax's long-delayed and much-criticized North American release of Miyazaki's previous hit, *Princess Mononoke*, Disney is moving quickly to get *Spirited Away* released, possibly as early as July," reported Mark Schilling of *Screen Daily*. "The studio has already engaged Pixar creative chief John Lasseter to serve as creative consultant on the dubbed version of *Spirited Away*."

Others involved with the project will be producer Don Ernst (*Fantasia 2000*) and dubbing director Kirk Wise (co-director of *Beauty and the Beast* and *Atlantis*, and a Miyazaki fan). Voice actors rumored to be involved include Daveigh Chase as little girl Chihiro, Lauren Holly as her mom and David Ogden Stiers, Suzanne Pleshette, and John Ratzenberger as some of the gods and monsters she meets in a bizarre town.

The production work on *Spirited* is reportedly scheduled to run through July, which would place the U.S. release no earlier than August. Some fans were lucky enough to see the film's North American debut at the San Francisco International Film Festival in April—the same month it saw theatrical release in France.

Released last July in Japan, *Spirited Away* won the Berlin Film Festival's Golden Bear Award in February and the Japanese Academy Award for Best Picture in March (Hayao Miyazaki also received an Outstanding Achievement Award). ■ FP

HOME BOX OFFICE

2002 YEAR-TO-DATE

Japan's theatrical anime scene in 2002 continues to be dominated by Studio Ghibli's production of Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*, still in theaters after nine months. The only other significant anime theatrical releases have been the movie spin-offs of popular anime TV programs. *Inu Yasha*, a Japanese medieval horror-comedy romantic fantasy, and the insufferably cute *Hamtaro Tales*, about a bouncy golden hamster and his pals, were in the Top 10 charts briefly during January and *Toei Animation's Spring 2002 Anime Fair* made the Top 10 in its first week out. The long-awaited third Patlabor movie, *Patlabor The Movie 3: WXIII*, was released by Shochiku Co. on March 30, too recently for any box office reports to reach America. It is expected to do well.

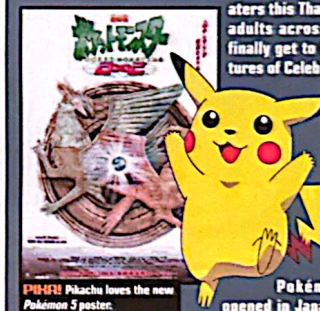
ANIME'S CURRENT TOP-GROSSING RELEASES IN JAPAN

RANK	TITLE	DISTRIBUTOR	RELEASE DATE	GROSSING
1	Spirited Away	Toho Films	July 20	$234,041,000+
2	Hamtaro: The Great Ham-Ham[illegible] Adventure	Toho Films	Dec. 15	$18,623,000
3	[illegible]: The Movie - The Love Which Transcends Time	Toho Films	Dec. 15	$10,541,000
4	[illegible] Spring Toei Anime Fair	Toei Co	March 2	$7,627,000
5	[illegible]: Mohite and the Lost Kingdom	Toho Films	March 9	$7,043,000

POKE-UPDATE

POKE-NEWS FOR POKE-FANS!

It's official! Miramax Films has announced that the fourth Pokemon movie, with the catchy title *Pokémon 4: The Movie—Celebi: A Timeless Encounter*, will be released in North American theaters this Thanksgiving! Kids and adults across the country will finally get to thrill to the adventures of Celebi, the time-traveling Pokémon who creates all sorts of new adventures for Ash, Misty and the gang! America has been looking forward to the next Pokémon film since it opened in Japan last July. It has since become one of that country's ten highest-grossing films of 2001, raking in ¥3.8 billion ($32 million) at the box office.



PIKA! Pikachu loves the new *Pokémon 5* poster.

And if that's not enough good news, Miramax has also optioned the rights to distribute the fifth Pokémon movie as well, currently in production at Japan's Shogakukan Productions! *Pokémon 5: Guardian Spirits of the Water Capital: Latias and Latios* will introduce two new Pokémon, Latias and her brother Latios, the mystical guardians of an aquatic world. The film will be prefaced by a short Pokémon film, *Pika Pika Starlight Camp*, when it premieres in Japan this July 13. ■ AI

BOY WONDER

GAME BOY ADVANCE IS AN OTAKU'S BEST FRIEND

There's only one necessary system for an anime fan to have. It's not the PlayStation 2. It's not Nintendo's GameCube. It's certainly not the Xbox. It does prove great things come in small packages.

Assuming the mere mention of anime games like the recent *Dragon Ball Z: Legacy of Goku*, *Monster Rancher* or the almighty *Pokémon* sends chills up your spine, this system has every base covered. From killer anime fighting games like the *Street Fighter* series, a larger crop of anime-inspired games cannot be found on any rival console system.

"Game Boy Advance is the anime game developer's choice for many reasons," said Perrin Kaplan, Nintendo vice-president of corporate affairs. "The hardware technology is extremely flexible and affordable, allowing for anime-specific concepts to be created efficiently. Also, the success of *Pokémon* has influenced developers to adopt a host of great anime licenses and bring them to Game Boy Advance—the perfect system for them because fans can take games anywhere and play anytime."

It also helps that the GBA has a virtual monopoly on the handheld gaming market. In Japan, that means game companies make more GBA games than for any other system, including anime games. And because it only costs a little to convert a game for American audiences, that means more anime-esque games trickle over to America.

Konami product manager Dennis Lee sees that as a huge positive. "This is an ideal platform for anime-related software," he stated. "It gives developers an opportunity to produce quality games on a platform with smaller development costs and quicker turnaround times than next generation home consoles. So the possibility of getting quality stuff like *Dragon Ball Z*, *Robotech* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* into your hands ASAP is more likely on the GBA than other system."

And it's true. Besides two *Dragon Ball Z* games, the GBA will also get two *Medabots* games in June, *Megaman Zero* in July, and a new *Robotech* game in September.

And if you're willing to import games, the pickings are even more plentiful. *Doraemon*, *Love Hina*, and *Flame of Recca* games already up for grabs in Japan. Check out the Release Schedule [next page] for more great anime games on GBA. Like they say, size doesn't

BOY FRIEND The GBA has all the anime hits, from the recent *DBZ: Legacy of Goku* (here) to the upcoming *Robotech: The Macross Saga*.

BITS OF BYTES

THE LATEST WORD ON GAMING

FRESH JAM

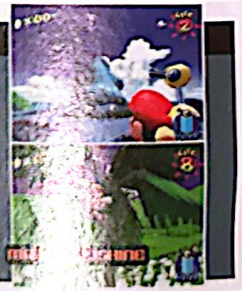
Domo arigato, Eidos. The company's new experimental publishing label, Fresh Games, will bring Americans the latest in bizarre, cutting-edge Japanese content. Already available are *Mister Mosquito* and *Mad Maestro*, both worth their weight in yen. What's next? A conversion of the RPG *Legaia 2: Duel Saga* arrives in June.

PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM

After a multi-year hiatus, Sammy USA returns. And they're packing licensed heat. Bucking current trends, the publisher of *Guilty Gear X* aims to bring well-known anime-inspired properties to all major next generation consoles before year's end. Something big in the works, and will be unveiled at E3. Stay tuned...

SHINE ON ME

Those #@$! (or, we mean "lucky") Japanese gamers will see the brand new Mario game in May, aka *Mario Sunshine*. Nintendo's latest platform extravaganza features huge 3D worlds, bubbly visuals and a gadget that lets the portly plumber star shoot water to wash away graphiti. Look for Mario & crew to hit America this holiday. ■ SS



WE WISH

WHY HASN'T ANYONE TRIED A TRIGUN VIDEO GAME?

Sure, Vash the Stampede, star of *Trigun*, doesn't really manage to shoot many people through his hilarious, action-packed anime series. But that's no reason not to make a great shooting game about him and his hyper-cool buddy Nicholas Wolfwood. Together, the first and second players would go blasting through the Wild West of the planet Gunsmoke, taking out one of the villainous Gung-Ho Guns gang—like the monstrous Monev the Gale—at the end of each level! On the way, shoot assorted things for power-ups to Vash and Wolfwood's guns. And like the anime, the shooting won't be to kill, but to incapacitate each baddie—like dropping barrels on them, trick-shots and so forth. This is how the West should be won! ■ RB

HOT TIPS

SECRETS FOR GAMERS ONLY

Megaman Battle Network (GBA) Want to meet Bass? Then get all 175 *Dream Aura* chips except for #127, then go to Internet Area 16. Keep wandering around, and he'll show up to fight you. Beat him, and the last chip is yours.

Eve of Extinction (PS2) So you've conquered *Devil May Cry*. What now? More difficulty, that's what! Beat the game once and you'll unlock the "Hard" difficulty setting. Complete the game on "Hard" to earn the Legendary Dark Knight Mode. Triumph over that to get Dante Must Die Mode. Happily, if you suck at this game, continuing a lot unlocks the Easy mode.

Fatal Fr[illegible] (PS2) So you're feeling a little spooked, but still rea[illegible] for new challenges? Beat the game to unlock Battle M[illegible]e, Special Function, Sound Test and Ghost List options. [illegible]en win it again on Nightmare difficulty for a second, alt[illegible]ste ending. ■ SS

RELEASE SCHEDULE

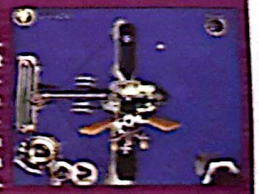
WE PICK 'EM, YOU PLAY 'EM

6/1: GUILTY GEAR X ADVANCE EDITION (Wki Soft); Game Boy Advance
Feisty anime characters bring the pain in a cult favorite one-on-one brawler. With beautiful 2-D animation and a heavy metal soundtrack straight out of 1987, choose 14 fighters with weapons like ship anchors or their hair.

6/11: DRAGON BALL Z COLLECTIBLE CARD GAME (Infogrames); Game Boy Advance
Time to ante up. Create decks using 300 cards from the Frieza, Saiyan, Trunks and Android Sagas, plus special GBA-only sets. Friends battle head-to-head or go solo, dealing their way up to a confrontation with Cell himself.

6/15: KING OF FIGHTERS EX: NEO BLOOD (Sammy); Game Boy Advance
Talk about punchy. Legendary fighters gather to compete in a mysterious tournament. Features like 2-player linked battles, multiple play modes and 24 characters should leave the competition bruised and bloody.

7/16: SKY GUNNER (Atlus); PlayStation 2
Alternate history, anime-style. Fly propeller-driven aircraft from a third-person perspective, raining shots down upon huge, fantastical aircraft. Stunning visuals and frenetic action should help this flyboy deliver a payload of addictive gameplay.



7/30: STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 (Capcom); Game Boy Advance
Introducing the latest installment in the greatest fighting game series ever. Now sports 33 characters, 3 different "-ism" combat styles, and mind-blowing audio-visual assets—sure to be one of the best-looking GBA games ever.

8/30: JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE (Capcom); PlayStation 2
Different is good. Well, whenever "different" means cel-shaded, weird and distinctly Japanese. A unique—and slightly disturbing—3D fighter based on the famous *JoJo* comic book. ■ CC

Scanned with CamScanner

BROADBAND ABROAD

STREAMING ANIME? BANDAI SAYS YES

Anime fans, get your computers started.

The idea of anime available for watching on demand on the Net has always been a far-off dream. The Cartoon Network offered the episodes of shows like *Starblazers* and *Record of Lodoss War* here and there, but in Japan, Bandai's going to go a few megabytes further.

Bandai's set up a new corporation, Bandai Channel Co., whose purpose will be providing broadband content to the public. With over 180 titles under Bandai's corporate belt, Japanese anime fans will have plenty to choose from! This isn't just a Website offering shows for download or tiny, choppy videos of *Jin-Roh* or *Gundam Wing*; according to the Bandai Channel's public relations department, they'll be using servers owned by fiber-optical companies to broadcast strong high-quality signals without the streaming problems most face when trying to tune into live video here in America.

DESKTOP DELIGHT Bandai prepares to deliver anime via computer.

But all of this is only for people with broadband, a service that hasn't yet taken off in America and is in less than 10 percent of Japanese households. Bandai is either expecting the average salaryman will be watching at his broadband-equipped company office (perhaps with headphones on, so the noise of beam sabers clashing doesn't distract his colleagues), or they're counting on alternate ways of tuning in. The plan is to make the service available not only to personal computers, but to game consoles and PDAs as well. Japan's Bandai Networks do stress that they're a major player in the mobile phone content distribution business, with over 4.15 million subscribers.

At the moment, Bandai is busy converting a massive 1,700 hours of anime to the digital format used on the site. It would take you over 70 days of solid viewing to watch that much content. Currently, the Bandai Channel plans to start offering content sometime this summer or fall in Japan, with no plans yet to offer it in America or Europe. Of course, if you have broadband, can read Japanese and don't mind watching your anime untranslated, gather your yen and get ready to sign up! ■ Joe Curzon

ON SCREEN

▼OFFICIAL WEBSITES EVERY OTAKU NEEDS

ESCAFLOWNE
www.escamovie.com
The Official Escaflowne Movie site has details about the cast and crew of the flick which has been touring the USA and is out on DVD this summer. Drop in for the little extras like raining angel feathers and staff interviews. Don't forget to download the trailers and drool over the movie while you can!

AKIRA
www.akira2001.com
ANGEL SANCTUARY
www.centralpark media.com/angel/
BLUE GENDER
www.bluegender.com
CARDCAPTORS
www.clowbook.com
COWBOY BEBOP
www.cowboybebop.com
DIGIMON
www.bandai.com/bsh mus/digimon/
DRAGON BALL
www.dragonball.com
DRAGON BALL Z
www.dragonballz.com
EVANGELION
www.gainax.co.jp/anim e/eva/evaindex-e.html
FURIKURI
www.gainax.co.jp/flcl/ index-e.html
FUSHIGI YUGI
www.viz.com/prod-octo/series/subchannel/
GHOST IN THE SHELL
www.manga.com/ghos t/ghost.html
GUNDAM
www.gundamofficial.com
JIN-ROH
www.jin-roh.net
METROPOLIS
www.metropolis movie.com
PERFECT BLUE
www.perfectblue.com
POKEMON
www.pokemon.com
ROBOTECH
http://robotech.alpha.com
STREET FIGHTER
www.street fighter alpha.com
TENCHI MUYO
www.tenchi.com
X THE MOVIE
www.manga.com/x_x/
YU-GI-OH!
http://www.yugiohking dmgames.com

And if you need a translation service to check out any Japanese sites, visit: www.excite.co.jp/world/url/ Plug in the address, hit the second radio button and then hit go!
■ Mike Duch

EBAY WHO?

ANIMEYHEM.COM ANIME AUCTION GOODNESS

There's no denying eBay's the premiere internet auction site, but there's one startup site that's going to make anime fans say "eBay *who*?" That's the plan of Animeyhem.com—the new auction site just for *otakus*. Website Production Manager Garner Loudermilk promises to make "those awesome, hard-to-find anime/manga auction items easy to find," which sounds good to us!

BUYING POWER Animeyhem.com promises to unite fans with anime goodies.

Having just launched on May 1, the sharply-designed site has similar features to other online auction sites, such as a seller rating system, search, dutch, "buy it now" and proxy auctions, plus live chat rooms and anime news. We especially like the sound of the Anime Auction Watch - a system that will alert you if any items you are chasing are up for sale. So at last you won't have to crawl through tons of evil non-anime products to find the goodies you are looking for! Now lets see if we can get that NERV coffee mug we've heard so much about... ■ JC

HANGING 10

WHERE ANIME BIGWIGS SURF ONLINE

Nao Yazawa

OCCUPATION: Manga creator
MAJOR WORKS: *Wedding Peach*
HOMEPAGE: http://www.geocities.co.jp/AnimeComic-Ink/3712/index_e.html

Nao Yazawa uses the web for a mix of fun and information-surfing about her inspirations. Her favorite is the official site of the god of manga himself, Osamu Tezuka. Hey, why go for second best?

She says that on Tezuka Osamu World (http://ja-t.tezuka.co.jp/) "you can get a lot of fun and it has almost complete information of his work." We agree! Honestly, we haven't even gotten to the information yet because we're having too much fun playing the cute games on the site, such as a neat bug catching game and the extremely addictive Astro Boy Dancing Game. ■ JC

DANGER DANGER

WHATEVER YOU DO, DO NOT CHECK OUT THESE WEBSITES

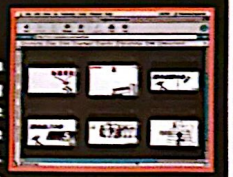
DANCING TOTOROS!

http://www.iria.freeserve.co.uk/totoro.html

You've seen the Pikachus dance, but the Totoros are even more talented! They have their own choreography and everything in what seems to be another tribute to the Dancing Hamster craze from a few years back! Induces madness!

XIAO XIAO!

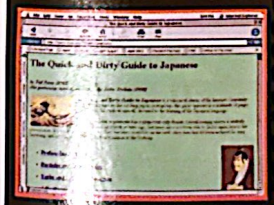
http://www.xiaoxiaomovie.com/



Since time began, would-be manga artists would practice their drawing skills using stick- men, but some chose to take it further still by animating the combat antics of their stick- people. This site is in Chinese, but after some navigation you'll be trapped forever watching these addictive little battles.

QUICK AND DIRTY GUIDE TO JAPANESE.

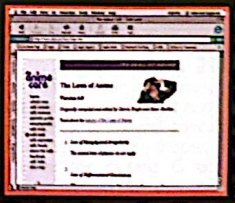
http://users.tmok.com/~tumble/qadgtj.html



This site will have you speaking the language just like your two-year-old nephew speaks the queen's English! Ever wanted to know how to ask "Are you going to the party tomorrow?" What more could you need to know? Apart from "Anime wa doko desu ka?" Where is the anime?

THE LAWS OF ANIME

http://www.abcb.com/laws/index.htm



You've studied the laws of physics at school; you've tried to break the law of gravity sometime or another. Well, fear the laws of Anime. This page lists all the laws and natural phenomena found in anime. Warning - after reading this, anime will seem different. Well, as if anime didn't seem different already! ■ JC

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STUFF

THE BEST ANIME AND MANGA-RELATED PRODUCTS

STATUE HUNTER D

Lookit all the vampire stuff you can get nowadays. *Buffy*'s on TV, *Queen of the Damned* was in theaters, and now there are even 1/6 scale coldcast statues like this one right here from Koto Inc./ArtFX. Y'know, people just don't get sick of vampires. Except Vampire Hunter D, that is. He hates this craze, but he'll probably understand if you decide to spend $149.99 on his nifty, fully assembled and painted *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust* statue. www.artfx-kotobukiya.com

YU YU WANT 'EM

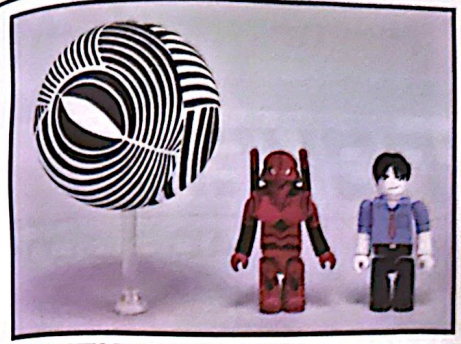
The newest anime hit on Cartoon Network is about to be the newest hit on toy shelves. Check out the four figures of the recently deceased and resurrected spirit detective Yusuke (right), street-tough Kuwabara, fox-spirit Kurama and the demon Hiei—each toy has over 100 paint applications! They look even better than the anime does! **www.if-labs.com**

YOU CHAN SQUEEZE IT

You know what happens when you're a mystical guardian that falls asleep for 30 years? You get turned into a *plush doll*, that's what! At least that's what we heard. Cardcaptor Sakura's li'l buddy Kero Chan is now a cool 8-inch poseable plush that Diamond's importing for $10.99. **http://previews.diamondcomics.com**

COMPUTERIZED BEATS

Satisfy your craving to hear more of the addictive tunes from *Final Fantasy X* with this yoPop soundtrack! This 17-track CD is a compilation of the huge *FFX* musical score, including hits like "[illegible]orld" and "Chocobo Jam." Check out **www.tokyo[illegible]com** for even more anime & videogame soundtr[illegible]



FOREVA AND EVA

Medicom continues to bring forth Kubrick insanity, this time to the delight of *Neon Genesis Evangelion* fans everywhere. Boxed Set I, featuring the 12th Angel Leliel, Kaji Ryoji and "Bloody Awakening" Eva Unit-01, can be yours for only $12.99! Expect further sets of 2 1/2"-tall figures based on *Evangelion* characters to follow soon. **http://www.medicomtoy.co.jp**

SMALL WONDER

Ruri Hoshino is a bit precocious. After all, she runs the entire starship *Nadesico* at a tender 11 years of age, and is still the smartest person on board. Is it any wonder she's so lovably bitter? You can't ask her, but you can ask the child star of *Martian Successor Nadesico* in 10-inch statue form to hang around your house, courtesy of Koto Inc./ArtFX. She's in stores now at $69.99. **www.artfx-kotobukiya.com**

BIRD WATCHERS

The G-Force revival continues! Dynamic Forces' 72-card *Battle of the Planets* trading card set includes Autograph Cards, Sketch Cards, 6 Animation Cel Cards and rare glimpses at the machinery, design and characters of the classic TV show, featuring today's hot artists! We'll trade you five Keyops for one Princess! Packs go for $1.99 each! **www.dynamicforces.com**

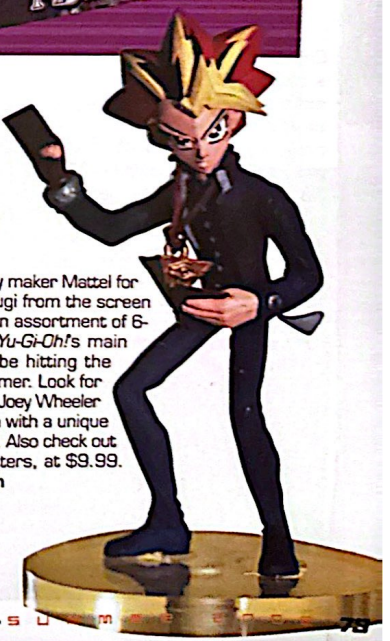
HOT PICK

HEAVY METAL YU-GI-OH!

Not since the heydays of the *Pokémon* card game have kids been running to get slices of cardboard to play with like this. Upper Deck's *Yu-Gi-Oh!* trading card game sold out when it debuted earlier this year, and now Yugi's quest to save the world continues in the Metal Raiders expansion with more powerful Effect and Fusion monster cards. 9-card booster packs go for $2.99 each. **www.upperdeck.com**

SIX INCHES OF FUN

You can thank toy maker Mattel for finally bringing Yugi from the screen to your hands. An assortment of 6-inch figures of *Yu-Gi-Oh!*'s main characters will be hitting the shelves this summer. Look for Yugi, Seto Kaiba, Joey Wheeler and others, each with a unique game, for $7.99. Also check out the Deluxe Monsters, at $9.99. **www.mattel.com**



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HOT FOR TEACHER

TOKYOPOP SNAGS *MARMALADE BOY* AND *GTO* FOR THE U.S.

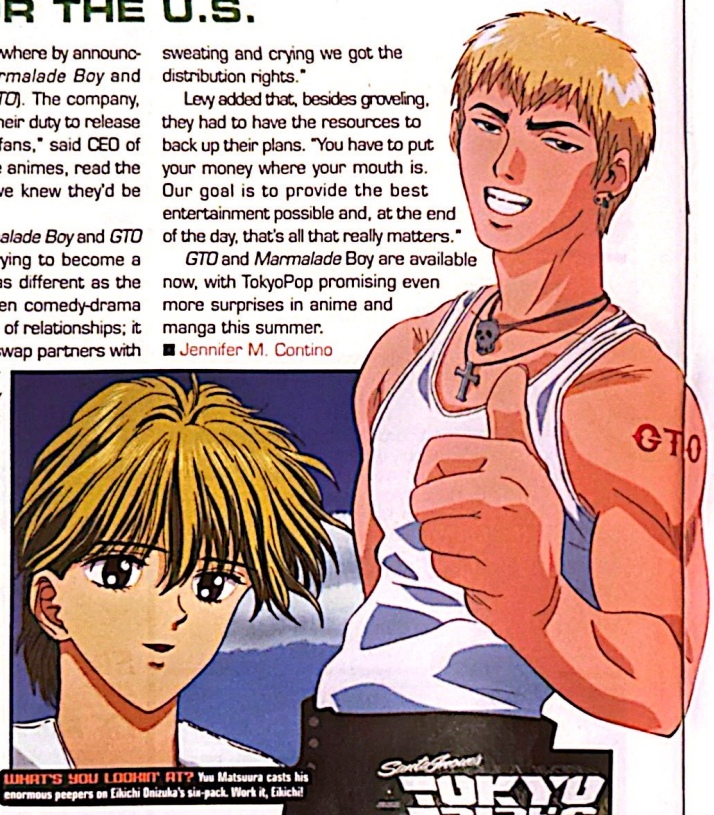
TokyoPop has delighted *otaku* everywhere by announcing two new acquisitions: *Marmalade Boy* and *General Teacher Onizuka* (aka *GTO*). The company, known as a super shojo site, felt it was their duty to release these popular series. "We listened to fans," said CEO of TokyoPop Stuart Levy. "We watched the animes, read the mangas, and if they entertained us, we knew they'd be right for all."

TokyoPop pursued the rights to *Marmalade Boy* and *GTO* (about a 22 year-old ex-street punk trying to become a teacher and help others) for reasons as different as the series themselves. *Marmalade* is a teen comedy-drama soap opera showcasing the complexities of relationships; it picks up when schoolgirl Miki's parents swap partners with another couple, and Miki falls for the other couple's son. "We got *Marmalade Boy* [the manga] after getting the anime; it seemed like a natural thing to do," explained Levy. "*GTO* was a different story."

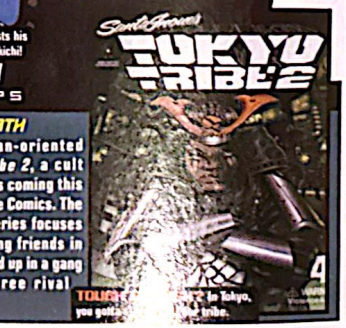
In *GTO*, "Great Teacher Onizuka" is the title former biker-gang member Eikichi Onizuka gives himself as he embarks on a quest to become a schoolteacher, to make sure more kids don't go through what he had to while growing up. Despite having juvenile interests and what at first seem like less-than-honorable motivations, his desire proves to be genuine—and hilarious. "We thought the anime was hysterical," said Levy, "and the manga was one of the best-selling of all time, so we really wanted to see it here in the States. After a lot of begging, pleading, sweating and crying we got the distribution rights."

Levy added that, besides groveling, they had to have the resources to back up their plans. "You have to put your money where your mouth is. Our goal is to provide the best entertainment possible and, at the end of the day, that's all that really matters."

GTO and *Marmalade* Boy are available now, with TokyoPop promising even more surprises in anime and manga this summer. ■ Jennifer M. Contino



WHAT'S YOU LOOKIN' AT? Yuu Matsuura casts his enormous peepers on Eikichi Onizuka's six-pack. Work it, Eikichi!



QUICK READS

PAGE TURNIN' NEWS CLIPS

SPOOKY SHELLS

Fans have been champing at the bit, waiting for the sequel to *Ghost in the Shell: Man-Machine Interface* to hit the States. Thankfully, the 11-issue series arrives from Dark Horse Comics in October. The first issue will be all color, with subsequent issues in black and white.

WE WILL ROCK YOU!

Otaku are petitioning Viz to pursue the rights to publish the *Rockman* (a.k.a. *Mega Man*) manga in the U.S. So far, the petition has over 3,500 signatures, including *Rockman* and *Big O* author Nitoshi Ariga. If you want *Rockman*, visit www.petitiononline.com/MegaRock today.

ON THE WARPATH

The violent, urban-oriented manga *Tokyo Tribe 2*, a cult favorite of *otaku*, is coming this fall from Dark Horse Comics. The hip, bold, brash series focuses on a group of young friends in Tokyo who get mixed up in a gang war between three rival factions. ■ JC

WITCHY WOMAN

SAILOR MOON'S TAKEUCHI BEGINS A NEW SERIES

After sending witches after her heroine for years, *Sailor Moon* creator Naoko Takeuchi is giving them their own comic.

Takeuchi has created a teenage witch who'd make Sabrina green with envy in her newest manga, *Love Witch*, which premiered in April in Japan's *Nakayoshi* magazine.

Ai "Love" Anjyu discovers a family secret: most people get candy, jewelry or clothes on their birthdays, but when Love turns 13, she gets powers and a witch heritage! As if puberty isn't troubling enough...

Love also seems plagued by death: She's lost her grandmother, parents and now her twin brother. She tried to save him with magic, but couldn't figure out how to make it work. Still, her troubles are just beginning!

If you're anxious to see *Love Witch*, which possesses all the charm of *Sailor Moon*, and can't wait for a translation, write in to TokyoPop and let them know you're out there! ■ JC

MANGA BY THE NUMBERS

5 Ronin Warriors who use magic armor to fight the forces of evil

5 Women who make up the CLAMP, the group of manga-ka (manga artists/writers) responsible for Cardcaptor Sakura, Clover, X and more

6,000,000 Dollar price of the Bionic Man's cybernetic attachments

60,000,000 Double dollar price on Vash the Stampede's head

11 Volumes of No Need For Tenchi! currently in circulation from Viz

1760 Birth year of Katsushika Hokusai, the man who coined the term "manga" for collected prints of sequential stories that he created

1951 Year manga favorite Tetsuwan Atom ("Mighty Atom", aka Astro Boy) was created by Osamu Tezuka

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE

TENCHI MUYO: THE MANGA VS THE ANIME

When Tenchi freed female space pirate Ryoko from her eternal prison, he never dreamed that she and her friends would make his life so much trouble!

If you're just reading the Viz manga, *No Need for Tenchi!*, or watching the Pioneer anime, you're not getting the whole story.

WHO WAS THAT CLONE AND MAD SCIENTIST?

• In the first two volumes, Minagi[illegible]one of Ryoko, is introduced and then gradually fades [illegible] but she never appears [illegible]anime at all.

• In Vol[illegible] and 6, Washu's rival, T[illegible]ppears. She's another mad scientist who went to school with Washu and once made a drinking bet to see who could create the strongest fighter and take over the Jurai royal family.

EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE?

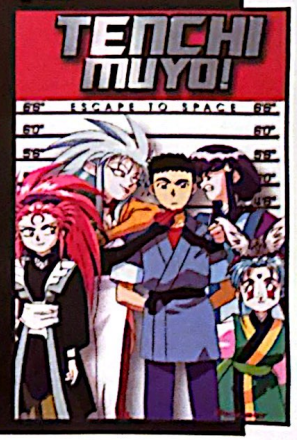
• Tenchi never says the "L" word in the anime. However, in Vol. 12 of the manga, Tenchi does say "I love you" to young Sasami! He's saying it in a "big brother" way, although she wishes it were different.

• Ryoko only has eyes for Tenchi in the anime, but in the manga Vol. 9, we meet Ibara, a warrior who looks a lot like Tenchi. He's the first person Ryoko expressed love to.

FAMILY MATTERS!

• In the anime, we're used to seeing Ayeka's hair in just one style. But in the manga (Vol. 10), we discover that Ayeka's hair used to look more like Sasami's, but Ayeka had herself genetically altered to look more like the mother of Yosho (Tenchi's grandfather), because she thought Yosho liked that look.

• In the anime, it's hard to fathom how klutzy Mihoshi landed a job as a space cop, but in the manga, we discover her job with the Galaxy Police is because she is the granddaughter of an important Galaxy Police higher-up. ■ JC



COMING COMICS

MANGA TO WATCH FOR THIS WINTER!

JUNE 5

FANTASY FIGHTERS (CPM MANGA)
To save her father's life Chisato would do anything, including being forced into servitude by the rich and sadistic Hebino family. Now her father is back like a phoenix and he's been cyberized. Can he save Chisato? What is the menace of the Bougeroids? MATURE READERS Koh Kawarajima $16.95

VAGABOND, VOLUME 2 (VIZ)
Takezo's a hunted man after escaping from his home village, and the samurai authorities are hot on his heels. But even if Takezo can elude his stalkers, he may find that the forests has perils he does not even suspect! Will bold young Takezo fight his way to freedom this time? MATURE READERS Takehiko Inoue $12.95

JUNE 12

SLAYERS SPECIAL #6 (CPM MANGA)
Here it is, the final installment of the Dark Crystal saga! Will Lina and Naga be able to defeat the evil Voldo and Master Galdin, or will Shie Woo lose the Dark Crystal to the forces of evil? Hajime Kanzaka and Tommy Ohtsuka $2.95

DRAGON BALL, PART 5 #1 (VIZ)
It's the eliminating rounds of the Strongest Under the Heavens martial arts tournament! Goku, Kuririn, and Yamcha find themselves settling somebody else's grudge when they meet their future opponents. Can their Turtle school kung fu defeat their opponents' Crane style? Akira Toriyama $2.95

JUNE 26

SLAYERS SUPER-EXPLOSIVE DEMON STORY BOOK 1: LEGEND OF DARKNESS (CPM MANGA)
15-year-old Lina Inverse is a master sorceress, with great skill and power. Her heroic deeds are usually more destructive than the foes she battles against. Teamed with Gourry Gabriev, a swordsman supreme who is dumb as a stump, Lina travels the land in search of fame, fortune and free food. Hajime Kanzaka and Tommy Ohtsuka $15.95

USAGI YOJIMBO #58 (DARK HORSE COMICS)
The "Crows" saga continues! On their way to the arranged duel between Katsuichi and the deadly kenshi Koji, Usagi and Koji stumble across a village besieged by bandits. Katsuichi's already there fighting, but the bandits just keep coming, and it looks as though there may be more than even the combined might of the three swordsmen can handle. Stan Sakai $2.99

SHORT CUTS, VOLUME 1 (VIZ)
The ko-gal. What is it about this extreme form of Japanese teenage fashion—this highly evolved creation of Japan's frenetically trendy consumer culture—that fascinates not only Japan, but also the world? Join Usumaru Furuya, one of Japan's most acclaimed and multi-talented manga artists as he takes readers on a bizarre journey inside the world of the ko-gal. Usumaru Furuya $12.95

CERES, CELESTIAL LEGEND, PART 3 #1 (VIZ)
Aya's confession of love to Tōya is interrupted by psychic "firestarter" Yūki Urakawa. Then, things start to get really hot when Aya inadvertently discovers that Yūki and a schoolteacher share a secret. Elsewhere, Aki decides to try to remember his past life in order to help Aya. Yū Watase $3.50

OTHER JUNE RELEASES

STORM RIDERS #4 (COMICSONE)
Betrayal takes central stage as Conquer launches a devious scheme to maintain control of the World Fighting Association. Meanwhile, the alliance against Conquer makes its move, ambushing Conquer's prized disciples, Wind and Cloud. Cloud is badly beaten and Wind is left alone to face his old friend Duan-Lang and his Peerless Castle allies. Wing Shing Ma $11.95

WOUNDED MAN # 8 (COMICSONE)
Keisuke and his squad decide to turn and fight the Veterans' Army, which has overrun Little Italy. After the battle, only two ex-Green Berets are left, but they are determined to fight to their last breath. Can Keisuke's men defeat the brutal Indian Joe and allow Keisuke a final chance for vengeance? Kazuo Koike and Ryoichi Ikegami $9.95

GUNDAM WING – ENDLESS WALTZ #4 OF 5 (TOKYOPOP)
After a year of peace a new war is brewing. Mariemaia Barton, the self-proclaimed heir to the Earth Sphere throne, is sending her army of Serpent Mobile Suits to take over the Earth and it's up to the Gundam boys to stop her. Hajime Yadate and Yoshiyuki Tomino $2.99

SAINT TAIL # 20 (TOKYOPOP)
It's spring break time, and the kids of Saint Paulia's school are going to the aquarium. Seira tells Meimi that a rare pearl dolphin in the aquarium was acquired illegally, so Meimi transforms into Saint Tail to set the dolphin free, but Asuka JR is hot on her tail. Megumi Tachikawa $2.99

MIRACLE GIRLS # 23 (TOKYOPOP)
The Miracle Girls have teleported home, but all is not well. Chris is still stuck on the isle of Diamas where Queen Marie tries to convince him to stay with her. The legends say that Diamas is meant to be ruled by two twin sisters, but the twins think Marie would rather rule alone. Nami Akimoto $2.99

JULY 3

MEDABOTS, VOL. 1: A BOY AND HIS BOT (VIZ)
This series takes off with super-charged battling adventures of a group of kids and their unique, high performance pet robots, the Medabots. Fueled with artificial intelligence and a specialized arsenal of unique weapons, Medabots compete against each other in exciting Robattles. Rin Horuma $9.95

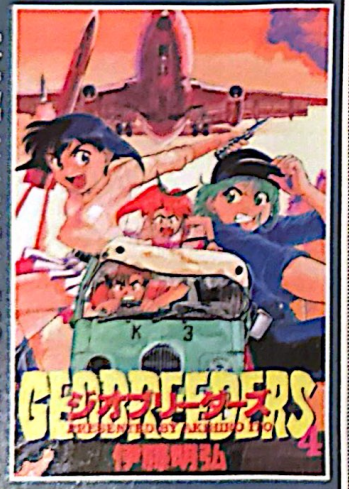
JULY 10

DARK ANGEL BOOK FOUR: LEGEND OF THE SACRED BEAST (CPM MANGA)
Dark has fought [illegible] on despite the odds against him. [illegible] Phantom Saint of the Red Phoenix keeps getting lost and can't even spread his wings at will, but there's something about him that keeps winning him [illegible] how he must cross a desert to [illegible] destiny. Kia Asamiya $15.95

HOT PICK

GEOBREEDERS BOOK FOUR: UNFRIENDLY SKIES

CPM Manga $3.95 (August 1)



WHY IT'S COOL Geobreeders, by Akihiro Ito, is a high-octane slugfest that never runs short on action, thrills and cute girls with machine guns! Private, paramilitary police force Kagura Security is engaged in a secret war with the Phantom Cats, otherworldly cat-people who have disguised themselves to hide among us. Although their opponents are mystical, Kagura's weapons are the latest in high-tech—and they have a whole lot of them! With plenty of high-speed chases and gunfights, the action never stops.

IN THIS ISSUE The ongoing feud between Kagura Security and the Phantom Cats has been legendary, but the stakes are raised even higher when one of our heroes is kidnapped! Making matters worse, hostage and hijackers alike are trapped on a jet airplane that the army is trying to shoot out of the sky! Getting stuck between the government and the Phantom Cats isn't the best place for any self-respecting action hero to be! ■ JC

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GETTING TO KNOW

JUNJI ITO

Junji Ito got his start working as a dental assistant, but rapidly became the Stephen King of manga, writing horrific stories that turn the simplest things into nightmares. His current manga—*Uzumaki*, about the spiralling, demonic forces that slowly tear apart a small Japanese town—has been made into a horror movie in Japan, and was recently nominated for an Eisner Award.

What inspired *Uzumaki*?

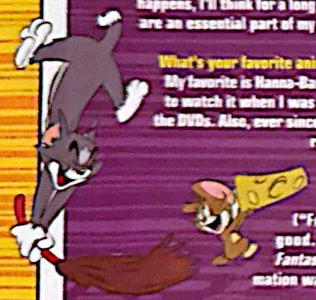
I wanted to create a really bizarre story. I thought of a lot of ideas and finally decided to create an odd tale of "an object" that was "really long." In thinking about the concept, I came up with the image of the "long object" curled into a whirlwind pattern. And that's how the "uzumaki" theme came about.

You're a master of horror, but what frightens or scares you?

Things that relate to "man" frighten me. Obviously, man's sick psyche is frightening, but what really scares me is man's body, particularly the face, when it is put in an extreme situation.

How do you cure creative blocks?

Perhaps because I'm used to doing short stories, I often have creative blocks when I work on longer stories. Whenever this happens, I'll think for a long time and take a bath. Baths are an essential part of my creative process.



What's your favorite anime?

My favorite is Hanna-Barbera's *Tom and Jerry*. I used to watch it when I was a kid, and today I have all of the DVDs. Also, ever since I was a kid, I've liked a horror anime called *Yokai Ningen Bem* ("Supernatural Person Bem"). Hayao Miyazaki's *Mirai Shonen Conan* ("Future Boy Conan") is also good. Recently, I saw Disney's *Fantasia* and was amazed. The animation was incredible.

A lot of manga-ka are working on Western superhero comics. What would your superhero story be like?

I guess it would have to be a horror story. It would have a really frightening feel to it and the main character would have to be a twisted superhero. And of course, the story would have to have an unhappy ending.

What other projects are you currently working on?

I'm working on *Gyo* which is currently serialized in *Big Comic Spirits*. It's a story about a creature from the sea that grows legs and that delves off onto land. ■ JC

BASTARD!! VOL. 1 (VIZ)
Under attack, the desperate defenders of Metallicana turn to "Dark Schneider", an ancient wizard sealed within a seemingly normal young boy. As dragons and monsters gather outside, Dark Schneider reawakens—but can the world's mightiest evil wizard really be controlled by the kiss of a 14-year-old girl? Kazuhisa Hagiwara $14.95

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL #70: BEASTS PART 5 (OF 7) (DARK HORSE COMICS)
The Itto-ryu have had their day with Hyakurin, and she hasn't broken. Now it's time to off her for good. Except their days and nights of torture have given Giichi time to track them down. Will he be in time to save Hyakurin? Hiroaki Samura MATURE READERS $2.99

JULY 17

RECORD OF THE LODOSS WAR: DEEDLIT'S TALE BOOK ONE: CHOICES (CPM MANGA)
Deedlit and Parn join up with the wizard Slayn to free the village of Hanam from an evil warlord. They are hopelessly outnumbered and, to make matters worse, an Elf named Estas is trying to come between Deedlit and Parn. It seems Estas doesn't like relationships between Elves and Humans. Ryo Mizuno and Masato Natsumoto $15.95

JULY 31

LONE WOLF AND CUB VOLUME 23: TEARS OF ICE TP (DARK HORSE COMICS)
Edo is flooded, and everything is floating away, including our vengeful ronin, his foe and his little boy. In an ironic show of samurai respect, little Cub Daigoro gets saved by the conniving Retsudo Yagyu. Eventually, the two opposing master swordsmen dry off and go head to head in a sword fight of a thousand stances and couple of days' length. Who will be victorious? Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima MATURE READERS $9.95

SUPER MANGA BLAST! #24 (DARK HORSE COMICS)
Five great stories including installments from: Club 9, 3x3 Eyes, What's Michael, Shadow Star, and Seraphic Feather. 128 pages of action, adventure, and fun. Various contributors MATURE READERS $5.95

OTHER JULY RELEASES

KAZAN # 7(COMICSONE)
All mysteries are revealed, including the identity of the Water Demon and the final fate of Elsie, in this stunning conclusion to the Kazan series. A mysterious witch in Goldene holds the answers that Kazan seeks and in a secret throne room his love for Elsie is tested a final time. Gaku Miyao $9.95

CARDCAPTOR SAKURA #30 (TOKYOPOP)
Even though Sakura has collected all of the Clow Cards, her journey has just begun. When she and her friends go to the craft shop one afternoon, her friend Li Syaoran suddenly attacks her. Could Clow Reed, the powerful magician who made the cards, be involved? CLAMP $2.99

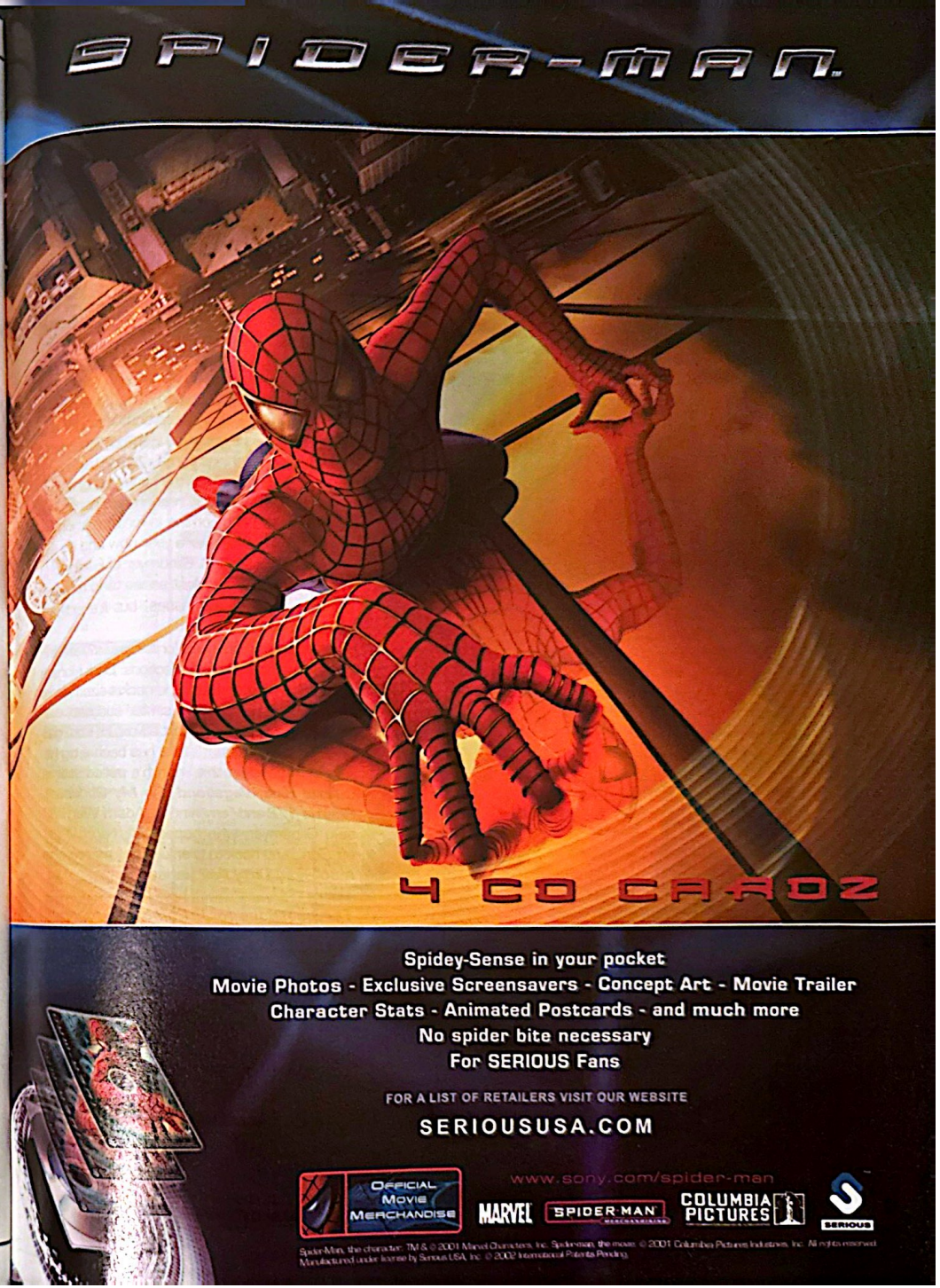
GTO VOL. 5 (TOKYOPOP)
Onizuka is not one to let a lady feel bad about herself. So when his young student, Tomoko, confesses that no one likes her, Onizuka makes it his personal mission to see that she earns the respect of her peers. Is the local talent show just what the teacher ordered? Tohru Fujisawa $9.99

YOU AND ME VOL. 1 #1 (STUDIO IRONCAT L.L.C.)
Yuu Aimu is a student looking for a place to live, now that he's going to school away from home. But just when he thinks he's found a potential place with affordable rent, poor Yuu discovers there's more to the rumors of ghostly hauntings than he could imagine. Aro Hiroshi $2.95

VAMPIRE YUI VOL. 4 # 6 (STUDIO IRONCAT L.L.C.)
Rasa's past is slowly revealing itself, hinting at the mysterious control Shiki has over her and her sisters. Meanwhile, Senju appears in the human world, trying to find Yui. Instead, he finds Sei and now they must team up to save Yui from Madoka's nefarious clutches. Narumi Kakinouchi $2.95

August 28

NADESICO BOOK FOUR (CPM M[illegible]
How can a lone battleship su[illegible] amassed power of two planets? Find out in the g[illegible] Nadesico as the hapless crew of the Nadesico [illegible] powerful Earth Federation forces and the [illegible]ians. They have journeyed out to the planet Jupite[illegible] rescuing a captain who might not want to be rescu[illegible] US $15.95



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BY J. CALEB MOZZOCCO

MANGA PRICE GUIDE

WHAT'S HOT, WHAT'S NOT AND WHY

The world of manga: a world of rises and falls, hills and valleys, winners...but no losers. Where manga is involved, everyone wins! Once again, TV tie-ins rule the roost, but well-crafted classics have their fan base as well. Who will be the victor? Who will be...the other victor? Read on and find out!

TOKYO HAS POP

You may not be able to *judge* a book by its cover, but a good cover can sure make you want to buy a book.

The manga mavens at TokyoPop recently introduced snazzy new uniform designs on their collections, featuring a plastic overlay and with the stories inside told right to left, the way the Japanese read their comics. Our survey of retailers this month shows the new books have been a big hit with readers this spring.

Most popular of all the TokyoPop volumes seems to be ***Cowboy Bebop***, propelled by a kick-ass anime series (which has been airing in America on Cartoon Network). James Wu, manager of Comicopia in Boston, said TokyoPop's ***Marmalade Boy*** and ***Chobits*** have been selling really well with female readers, while boys have been snapping up *Bebop* and *The Skullman* at his store.

Never underestimate the power of television when it comes to popularity. Another anime tie-in has had a pretty impressive debut—***The Big O***, the new Viz series based on the anime of the same name. Gib Bickel, proprietor of The Laughing Ogre in Columbus, Ohio, reports he's been selling out of issues, which seems to be the story everywhere.

PORCELAIN THRONE Akira likes marmalade, but it keeps him in the bathroom all day.

ROOTING FOR THE CUBS

Let's face it, if Dark Horse's re-releases of ***Lone Wolf and Cub*** went to high school with you, they'd have been voted prom queen. The pocket-sized collections, which include five stories each for only $10, are seen as a great value by readers, proof positive that good things come in small packages. Far from winding down as the series progresses, retailers report that new readers are constantly getting hooked and coming in for their monthly fix. "It's been out for over a year now and it's still going strong," said J. C. Glindmyer of Earthworld in Albany, New York. "Most series tend to peter out after the first few issues, but it's actually picked up readers."

Right on *Lone Wolf*'s heels (or is it paws?) are the big, fat *Akira* "phone-book" collections. Dark Horse's latest major manga release, the pocket-sized ***Astro Boy***, seems to be poised for similar success, with retailers reporting that the robot adventure from godfather of anime Osamu Tezuka has been a big hit. Also selling well at this month's polled stores is ***Love Hina***, ***Vagabond***, ***Oh My Goddess!***, ***Ranma 1/2*** and "anything by Adam Warren," said Glindmyer, who hopes Warren will get off *Gen*[13] and back to cranking out more of his much-liked ***Dirty Pair*** series.

For questions to J. Caleb Mozzocco or about collecting anime, e-mail us at AnimeInvasion@aol.com.

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THE TOP 10

CAN YOU RECOGNIZE THE HOTTEST YU-GI-OH! CARDS?

You know it, you love it and now you can take a piece of it home with you! No, not that skimpy bikini top you saw Princess Leia wearing. We're talking about the latest anime-related craze to hit the U.S., *Yu-Gi-Oh!* Sure, the trading card game only hit our shores recently, but that's after selling over 2.5 billion cards in Japan over the last six years! Filled with the monsters, magical spells and devious trap cards seen in the show, the *Yu-Gi-Oh!* TCG has already sold out of the limited edition run of its first set, *Legend of Blue-Eyes White Dragon*, so we painstakingly researched the top 10 hottest cards in the game to give you the run-down here. — Jeremy Smith

10. POLYMERIZATION

Monster cards are the core of the game, and there are plenty to choose from. Most just duke it out in the trenches, but others have powerful effects on the field of play. Still others can fuse together into one larger monster. That's where Polymerization comes in. When you have it in your hand or in play along with two of the right creatures, you can put the larger fusion monster directly into play and get a leg-up on the normal one-per-turn monster. Since this is the only card that lets you perform such a maneuver and it's one of the game's few super-rares, it's no shock that it's going for $15 a pop.

9. MONSTER REBORN

Another way to break the one-per-turn monster limit, Monster Reborn lets you re-use monsters that have already met their maker. But not just your own monsters—this card also lets you steal any monster from your opponent's graveyard as well for use in your evil plans. For a really mean trick, use Monster Reborn to steal a critter, and then use it as a tribute—a sacrificial cost—to play a huge monster that requires it. Only 10 ultra-rares like this card exist, and they come just once in every 12 booster packs. You can grab it for about $15.

THE TOP 10

HOTTEST *YU-GI-OH!* CARDS

8. Dark Magician

Dark Magician is the crown of the spellcaster crop, weighing in with a hefty attack value of 2500 and a defense of 2100—enough to take down all but the fiercest of monsters in the game. His level seven stat means you'll have to give up two other monsters in tribute in order to play him, but the Magician's raw power is well worth the cost. You can find him in the Yugi starter deck and in the Dark Duel Stories Game Boy game, but the ultra-rare booster pack version is the real prize at $20.

7. Gaia the Fierce Knight

With an impressive attack of 2300 and defense of 2100, Gaia ranks as one of the top fighters in the game. Of course, you're probably thinking, "Why not just play Dark Magician?" The answer lies in cards like Legendary Sword and Sogen. The Sword lets you pump Gaia—or any Warrior—by 300 on both attack and defense, while Sogen increases them by 200 each but can also be played on Beast-Warrior creatures. An ultra-rare like the Magician, Gaia can be had for $20.

6. Red-Eyes Black Dragon

Of course, dragons are the heart of any fantasy-based game. One of the most impressive and hard-to-get is Red-Eyes Black Dragon. Among the most powerful creatures in *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, this dark dragon boasts an attack value of 2400 and a defense of 2000. As a dragon, it can be invoked by Dragon Treasure or Mountain. On the collecting side, dragons generally command big dollar, and this ultra-rare is no exception at $20.

5. Exodia's Body Parts

If at any time you hold all four of Exodia the Forbidden One's body parts—Right Leg, Left Leg, Right Arm, and Left Arm—plus Exodia himself in your hand, you can declare an automatic victory. It's not the most interactive win mechanism ever invented for a trading card game, but if you can pull it off, it's quite impressive. The four ultra-rare body parts each sell for $25 a pop, though, so pulling even one of each will set you back a pretty penny.

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DRAGONBALL POKÉMON DIGIMON ty MAGIC The Gathering

THE TOP 10

HOTTEST *YU-GI-OH!* CARDS

4. BLUE-EYES WHITE DRAGON

When it comes to raw power, nothing tops Blue-Eyes White Dragon, for whom this series is named. Featuring a whopping attack of 3000 and defense of 2500, it's the most powerful monster in the game. And, like Red-Eyes Black Dragon, it gets a boost from all the same cards. You can find it in Dark Duel Stories and in the Kaiba starter deck, but its ultra-rare alternate art booster pack version will lighten your wallet by $30.

3. GAIA THE DRAGON CHAMPION

One of the two hardest-to-find cards in the set, Gaia The Dragon Champion is the most powerful fusion monster in the game, with an attack of 2600 and a defense of 2100. He's slightly smaller than the other major dragons, but he makes up for it in that you can pull him directly from your fusion deck instead of waiting to draw him. However, you will need Gaia The Fierce Knight, Curse Of Dragon and Polymerization to play him. He tips the scales at $30.

2. TRI-HORNED DRAGON

The other half of the "secret rare" duo, Tri-Horned Dragon will take down almost any creature with its attack of 2850 and defense of 2350. Another thing that sets the secret rares apart from the rest of the cards is their way-cool rainbow foil background. Like Gaia The Dragon Champion, Tri-Horned Dragon also hooks for $30.

1. EXODIA THE FORBIDDEN ONE

Sure, he's only a wimpy 1000 on both attack and defense, but Exodia gives you an automatic victory condition. Sure, it'll take the other four body parts to achieve that goal, but nothing says "get this card" like one that simply says "you win the game" on it. Of course, a unique card like this is ultra rare. Though you can find him packaged with the Game Boy game, true collectors will want to snag the booster pack version for a mere $35. Exodia can be yours!

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YU-GI-OH! PRICE GUIDE

LEGEND OF BLUE-EYES WHITE DRAGON: FIRST EDITION

UPPER DECK (2002)

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Blue-Eyes White Dragon

HEAVY METAL

YU-GI-OH!: METAL RAIDERS IS ON THE WAY

Are you ready for the next step in dueling action, Yu-Gi-Oh! fans? Well, in June, the newest expansion for the game, Metal Raiders, brings a load of 142 solid new cards to let you power-pack your monster arsenal. The series features a whopping 35 new effect monsters, like Toon Wizard, Beryl Dragon and Celtic Guardian, as well as more Fusion monsters, like Dark Steel Knight and Twin-Headed Thunder Dragon.

Other new bursts will include monster tokens, continuous and quick-play magic cards and a whole slew of new monster effects. Be sure to keep your eye out in Metal Raiders for magic cards like Heavy Storm and Raigeki Break, trap cards like Mirror Force and Solemn Judgment, and ritual cards such as Magic Jammer and Mirror Force, but watch out for the Shadowrain Mist! ●JS

METAL RAIDERS

UPPER DECK (2002)

NAME	TYPE	RARITY
Alpha The Magnet Warrior	Warrior	C
Ancient Elf	Spellcaster	C
Ancient Gear Golem	Machine	VR
Ancient Gear Soldier	Warrior	C
Ancient Gear Workshop	Spell Card	UR
Ancient Rules	Spell Card	C
B. Skull Dragon	Synchro Monster	SR
Baby Dragon	Dragon	C
Beast Fangs	Spell Card	C
Berserk Gorilla	Warrior	C
Big Eye	Machine	C
Blackland Fire Dragon	Dragon	C
Blast Juggler	Spellcaster	C
Blast Magician	Spellcaster	SR
Blast Sphere	Machine	C
Blue-Eyes White Dragon	Dragon	UR
Bottomless Trap Hole	Trap Card	C
Breaker the Magical Warrior	Spellcaster	C
Call of the Mummy	Trap Card	C
Castle of Dark Illusions	Effect Monster	C
Celtic Guardian	Warrior	C
Change of Heart	Spell Card	C
Chaos Command Magician	Spellcaster	SR
Chaos Emperor Dragon	Effect Monster	UR
Chaos Sorcerer	Effect Monster	SR
Charcoal Inferno	Effect Monster	C
Cold Wave	Spell Card	C
Command Knight	Warrior	C
Commencement Dance	Spell Card	C
Crawling Dragon	Effect Monster	C
Crawling Dragon #2	Effect Monster	SR
Cyber Dragon	Machine	C
Cyber Dragon Infinity	Machine	SR
Cyber Harpie Lady	Winged Beast	C
Cyber Jar	Effect Monster	C
Cyber Shield	Spell Card	C
Dark Blade	Warrior	C
Dark Bribe	Trap Card	C
Dark Dragon Ninja	Effect Monster	C
Dark Elf	Spellcaster	C
Dark Energy	Spell Card	C
Dark Hole	Spell Card	C
Dark Magician	Spellcaster	UR
Dark Magician Girl	Spellcaster	UR
Dark Magician of Chaos	Effect Monster	SR
Dark Master - Zorc	Effect Monster	UR
Dark Paladin	Synchro Monster	SR
Dark Ruler Ha Des	Effect Monster	C
Dark Sage	Spellcaster	C
Dark Snake Syndrome	Effect Monster	C
Dark Spirit of the Silent	Spellcaster	C
Dark Sword of Dark Destruction	Spellcaster	C
Darkfire Soldier #1	Effect Monster	C
Darkfire Soldier #2	Effect Monster	SR
Darkness Approaches	Spell Card	C
Darkworld Thorns	Spell Card	C
Dedication through Light and Darkness	Spell Card	C
Delinquent Duo	Effect Monster	C
Destiny Board	Spell Card	C
Destiny Hero - Dogma	Fusion Monster	C
Destiny Hero - Plasma	Fusion Monster	C
Destiny Hero - Malicious	Fusion Monster	C
Destiny Hero - Diamond Dude	Fusion Monster	C
Destiny Hero - Dreadmaster	Fusion Monster	C
Destiny Hero - Doom Lord	Fusion Monster	C
Destiny Hero - Dogmatika	Fusion Monster	C
Destiny Hero - Plasmatic Fiend	Fusion Monster	C
Destiny Hero - Malicious Edge

BY J. CALEB MOZZOCCO

INVASION PROFILE

BUBBLEGUM CRISIS TOKYO 2040'S PRISS

ROCK 'EM SOCK 'EM
Most heroes with dual identities have one cool one and one lame one, but not Priss. When she's not beating down killer robots, she's singing in her rock band Sekina. She's like Joan Jett and Sarah Connor in one pretty package.

FRIENDS LIKE THESE
Motorcycle-riding mystery girl Priss may be one bad chick, but taking on boomers isn't a one-woman job. Talented rookie Linna, perky computer hacker Nene and hardsuit inventor Sylvia round out the Knight Sabers' roll call.

SEXY MECHS
Priss and her team don't need no stinkin' giant robots to get their job done. Their hardsuits are sleek, form-fitting armored suits armed with concussion gloves, retractable blades and super-sharp, ribbon-like razor wires.

BIKER CHICK
When Priss isn't flying through the air in her hardsuit (shown right), she's zipping through the streets on a red motorcycle. She first meets new recruit Linna by almost running her over on her bike.

TO SERVE AND NEGLECT
Don't expect to see a Knight Sabers signal shining over Neo-Tokyo. The A.D. Police, assigned to busting boomers, are in constant competition with the girls, sometimes even turning their guns on them.

ORIGIN: Life in the year 2040 is made easier by the prevalence of boomers, sophisticated robots that have taken over much of mankind's menial labor. Or rather, life would be easier if it weren't for the fact that these robots occasionally mutate into monsters more interested in destroying than serving their human masters! On the front lines of the battle against bad boomers is Priss, the curvaceous field leader of the Knight Sabers, a vigilante group of young women with hi-tech battle armor called hardsuits that make them more than a match for even the roughest robots.

NOW APPEARING: Join Priss and the Knight Sabers as they rip robots to pieces in the *Bubblegum Crisis Tokyo 2040* Perfect Collection, the entire epic adventure in one handy six DVD set, available from ADV Films this August (Hardsuit not included). Can't wait? Then? ADV has finished releasing the entire 26-episode TV series on VHS tapes or six DVDs. Harder to find but also of interest is the [illegible] *Bubblegum Crisis* series and its three episode follow-up [illegible] all from AnimEigo.

BETTERMAN

The Awakening of Horror

A DEADLY VIRUS HAS ATTACKED HUMANITY WITH VICIOUS INTENT! WILL THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF THIS SECRET ORGANIZATION AND THE MYSTERIOUS WARRIOR BETTERMAN BE ENOUGH TO SAVE TOKYO?

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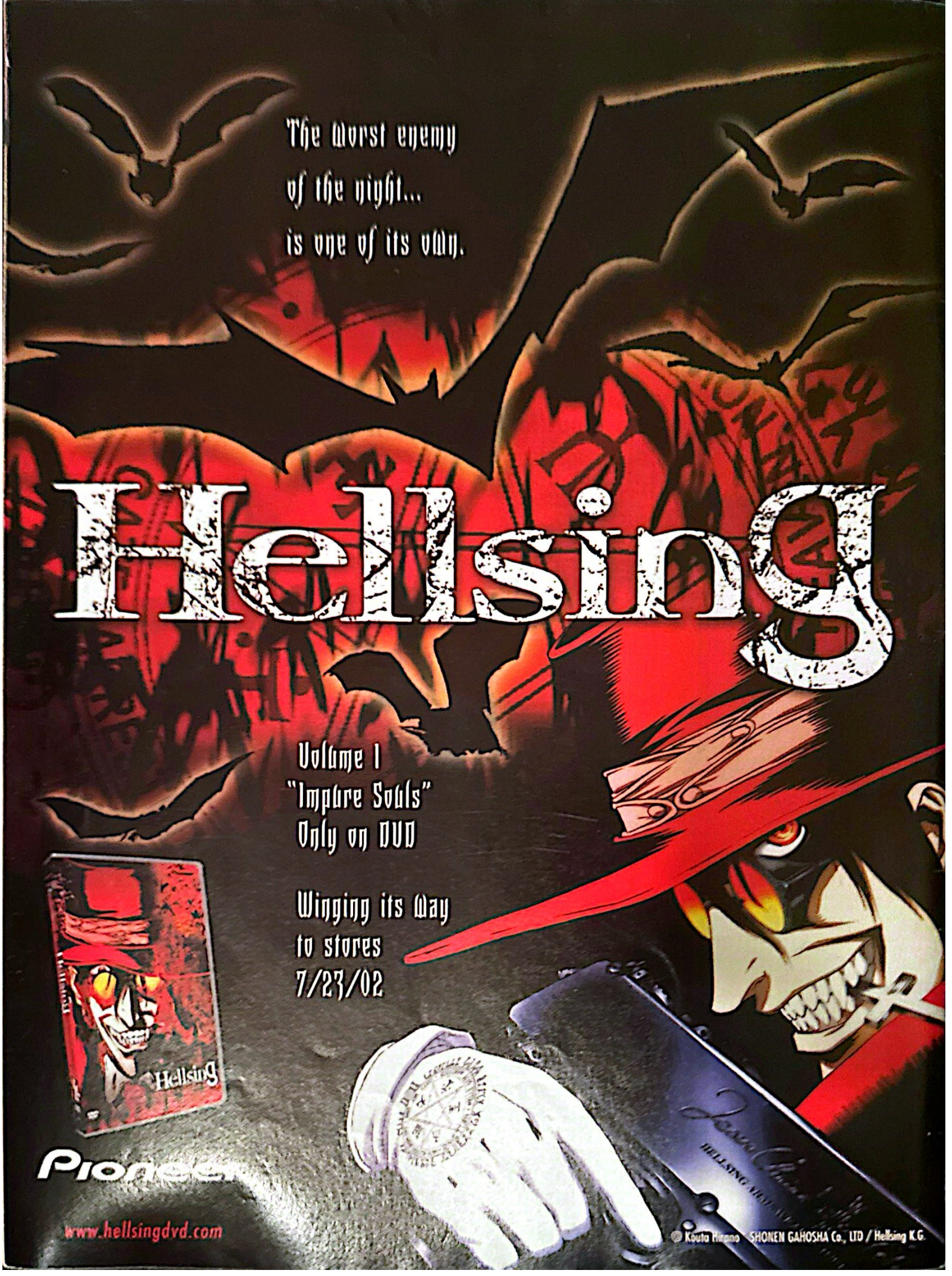

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